



**Ageism in the workplace: stereotype threat,
work disengagement and organizational disidentification
among older workers**

Eduardo André da Silva Oliveira

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Supervisor: Professor Doutor Carlos José Cabral-Cardoso

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To Beatriz, for being the most beautiful daughter in the world

To my wife Raquel, for all her love

To my family

O Talento na Juventude e na Velhice

Nada menos exacto do que supor que o talento constitui privilégio da mocidade. Não. Nem da mocidade, nem da velhice. Não se é talentoso por se ser moço, nem genial por se ser velho. A certidão de idade não confere superioridade de espírito a ninguém. Nunca compreendi a hostilidade tradicional entre velhos e moços (que aliás enche a história das literaturas); e não percebo a razão por que os homens se lançam tantas vezes recíprocamente em rosto, como um agravo, a sua velhice ou a sua juventude.

Ser idoso não quer dizer que se seja necessariamente intolerante e retrógado; e engana-se quem supuser que a mocidade, por si só, constitui garantia de progresso ou de renovação mental. As grandes descobertas que ilustram a história da ciência e contribuíram para o progresso humano são, em geral, obra dos velhos sábios; e a mocidade literária, negando embora sistematicamente o passado, é nele que se inspira, até que o escritor adquiere (quando adquiere) personalidade própria.

(...) A mocidade, em geral, não cria; utiliza, transformando-o, o legado que recebeu. Juventude e velhice não se opõem; completam-se na harmonia universal dos seres e das coisas. A vida não é só o entusiasmo dos moços; nem só a reflexão dos velhos; não está apenas na audácia de uns, nem apenas na experiência dos outros; realiza-se pela magnífica integração das virtudes contrárias, sem a qual não seria possível, em todo o seu esplendor, a marcha da humanidade. Que se ganha em cavar um abismo entre mocidade e velhice, se uma é, fatalmente, o prolongamento da outra; se o que passa de mão em mão é, afinal, o mesmo facho aceso, como na corrida ritual da Grécia antiga; e se, bem vistas as coisas, não está de nenhum modo provado que os novos sejam intelectualmente os mais novos, e os velhos os mais velhos?

(...) Como admitir o divórcio entre novos e velhos - invenção antinatural dos conventículos literários de todos os tempos -, se os velhos têm nas novas gerações, penhor radioso do futuro, o instrumento de compreensão e de difusão da sua obra, e se os novos devem aos velhos a formação do seu espírito, a educação da sua sensibilidade e a opulenta capitalização de riquezas da língua em que se expressam? A paz entre idades sucederá um dia, decerto, à paz entre as nações - quando a velhice

egoísta reconhecer, finalmente, que não deve menosprezar os moços, antes facilitar-lhe o caminho da vida, e quando, por seu turno, a juventude impaciente chegar à convicção de que não é atropelando nem injuriando que se vence, e de que, quando os jovens se instalaram no planeta - já os velhos o habitavam.

Júlio Dantas, in "Páginas de Memórias"

Biographical Note

Eduardo André da Silva Oliveira was born on the 13th December 1978, in Maia, Portugal. In 2001, he concluded his degree in Psychology, specialization in Work and Organizational Psychology at the University of Porto - Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

After a brief working experience in a local development project, he started a career in vocational training at the Portuguese Entrepreneurial Association - Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in 2002. Three years later, he published *Mudança de Rota*, his first peer reviewed paper in *Comportamento Organizacional e Gestão*, and in 2009 he completed the Master degree in Human Resources Management at the University of Minho - School of Economics and Management - on the topic of “Organisational Commitment among Temporary Workers”.

Later that year, he started lecturing at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Porto - Faculty of Education and Psychology - a position he is holding for 7 years. He has taught courses such as Organizational Behavior within the degree in Psychology and within the Master degree in Psychology, Specialization in Work and Organizational Psychology, and the Master degree in Psychology and Human Resources Development. At the management level, he joined the coordination team of the Master’s in Psychology and Human Resources Development from 2014 to 2015. In 2015, he started lecturing at the University of Porto - Faculty of Economics - Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management within the degree in Management.

In 2014, he received in Valencia, the EURAM Doctoral Colloquium Best Paper Award - 1st prize for his PhD literature review entitled “Ageism in the workplace: stereotype threat, organizational disidentification and work disengagement among older workers”.

Since 2013, he is a Member of the Board of the Regional Delegation for the North of the Order of Portuguese Psychologists, and in 2016 he has become a reviewer of the journal *Revista Portuguesa de Saúde Ocupacional*.

Eduardo Oliveira is also currently the coordinator of the Master’s Degree in Psychology and Human Resources Development at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Porto - Faculty of Education and Psychology.

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Abstract

Against a background of ageing European workforces, negative stereotypes about older workers are widespread and seem to endure. Older workers awareness of negative beliefs about their age group held by outgroups may increase the worry and concern of being stigmatized that characterizes the stereotype threat experience. From a management perspective, it is relevant to examine antecedents, boundary conditions, and attitudinal outcomes of age threats in the workplace, as they may affect older workers well-being.

This cross-sectional study was conducted in two steps and involved a convenience sample of blue-collar older workers of the manufacturing sector. In the first step of the study, the mediation role of negative age-based metastereotypes in the relationships between older workers representation and age-based stereotype threats was examined. Results provide support for partial mediation and for a moderation effect of age diversity beliefs in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat. Thereby, this study provides further support for a multi-threat approach to the experience of age-based stereotype threats in the workplace.

Results from the second step of the study show that own-reputation threat partially mediates the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and both work disengagement and organizational disidentification equally across older worker age groups. Mediation analyses show that negative age-based metastereotypes are strongly related with negative work attitudes, and that age group identification strengthens the positive relationships between own-reputation threat and negative work attitudes. Moreover, findings from a multiple mediation model highlight the usefulness of a multi-stereotype threat framework perspective to better understand older workers beliefs and work attitudes. Lastly, results show that not all perceived HRM practices reduce older workers stereotype threat vulnerability. To be effective, HRM practices should emphasize positive social identities older workers share with their colleagues, instead of giving them special treatment that may reinforce stigmatization.

Resumo

Num quadro de envelhecimento da mão de obra europeia, os estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos são generalizados e persistentes. A tomada de consciência por parte dos trabalhadores mais velhos de que outros grupos etários possuem crenças negativas acerca do seu grupo etário pode aumentar o medo e preocupação de ser estigmatizado característicos da experiência da ameaça de estereótipo. Numa perspetiva de gestão, é pois relevante examinar os antecedentes, moderadores, e consequências atitudinais das ameaças etárias no contexto de trabalho, uma vez que estas podem influenciar o bem-estar dos trabalhadores mais velhos.

Este estudo transversal foi realizado em duas etapas com uma amostra de conveniência constituída por operários mais velhos da indústria transformadora. Os resultados da primeira etapa suportam uma perspetiva multidimensional da ameaça etária no contexto de trabalho evidenciando que as relações entre a representação de trabalhadores mais velhos e ameaças de estereótipo etário são parcialmente mediadas por metaestereótipos etários negativos e que as crenças sobre a diversidade etária moderam a relação entre os metaestereótipos etários negativos e a ameaça à reputação do trabalhador mais velho.

Os resultados da segunda etapa mostram que a ameaça à reputação do trabalhador mais velho media parcialmente e de forma invariante as relações entre metaestereótipos etários negativos e descomprometimento com o trabalho, e desidentificação organizacional. Os metaestereótipos etários negativos estão fortemente relacionados com atitudes negativas no trabalho, e a identificação com o grupo etário intensifica as relações positivas entre a ameaça à reputação do trabalhador mais velho e as atitudes negativas no trabalho. Os resultados sugerem que nem todas as práticas de gestão de recursos humanos percebidas atenuam a vulnerabilidade dos trabalhadores mais velhos à ameaça de estereótipo. Para serem bem sucedidas, estas práticas devem enfatizar as identidades sociais positivas partilhadas entre trabalhadores, ao invés de apostarem em práticas segmentadas para os trabalhadores mais velhos que podem reforçar a sua estigmatização.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research background

In recent years, declining mortality and fertility rates together with the increased life expectancy are reversing most European countries' age pyramids leading to a greater relative weight of older people (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; European Commission, 2014; Schröder, Muller-Camen, & Flynn, 2014; van Rooij, 2012). By extension, the older workers' representation in organizations has been growing (Kulik, 2014a). In Portugal, the labor force aged under 35 has been reduced by 7% since the beginning of the century; in the same period, the representation of workers aged over 44 years old increased by 4% (Statistics Portugal, 2012). In addition to demographic shifts, some governments are providing incentives (e.g., tax exemptions) to increase the older workers employment rates given that the early retirement scheme is no longer sustainable (Eurofound, 2013). As a result, older workers are a relevant segment of today's workforce (Kulik, 2014a).

Ageing workforces (European Commission, 2011) have become a central issue for scholars of different areas and practitioners alike, chiefly because there is the concern that negative stereotypes about older workers may yield detrimental effects on organizational dynamics (e.g., von Hippel, Kalokerinos, & Henry, 2013).

The workplace ageism literature has highlighted three entangled phenomena that explain why more research on this topic needs to be undertaken. Firstly, intergenerational tensions between younger and older workers are likely to escalate because employment is an increasingly scarce resource in those economies hit by the most recent economic crisis. Hence, negative age stereotypes about older workers are likely to spread, and ethnocentric and discriminatory behaviors are expected (Guillaume et al., 2013). Furthermore, intergenerational tensions may be intensified by ageist work settings characterized by negative beliefs about what other age groups think of one's ingroup, a belief best described as negative age-based metastereotypes (Finkelstein, King, & Voyles, 2015; Finkelstein, Ryan, & King, 2013).

Secondly, despite growing in numbers in most European countries, older workers continue to live in youth-oriented cultures that share the assumption that

younger workers are more desirable members of the workforce than older workers (Stone & Tetrick, 2013). Though the relative weight of older workers is increasing, older workers may still lack a sense of belonging when underrepresented in a particular organization. Such a numeric underrepresentation might enhance older workers' stigmatized status, thus triggering feelings of stereotype threat (Bragger, Torres, & Kutcher, 2014; Kalokerinos, von Hippel, & Zacher, 2014; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Besides, notwithstanding workplace ageism prevalence (Posthuma, Wagstaff, & Campion, 2012), less effort has been put on its prevention than on biases associated with race or gender stereotypes. The disregard for age bias, the context, and the concerns, perceptions, and preferences of the older worker seems unwise (Fineman, 2011), given that negative workplace stereotypes about older workers may not only foster intergenerational tensions (North & Fiske, 2015) but also prevent older workers from getting fully engaged at work and identified with the organization.

Thirdly, given that negative stereotypes about older workers performance and competences are diverse and widespread (Fineman, 2011; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Posthuma et al., 2012), and that stereotypical beliefs tend to change very slowly (Tajfel, 1959), it is admitted that older workers will experience stereotype threat in the workplace (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Roberson, Deitch, Brief, & Block, 2003). Accurate or not, older workers are likely to wonder whether managers and co-workers endorse those negative stereotypes and for that reason they fear being judged and treated according to them (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; King, Kaplan, & Zaccaro, 2008), thus triggering experiences of age-based stereotype threat (Kray & Shirako, 2011). Stereotype threat is best understood as the concern that others might judge someone on the basis of a negative stereotype about one's ingroup (Steele et al., 2002). Stereotype threat experiences are likely to be intensified in organizational contexts where negative beliefs about what other age groups think of one's group yield intergenerational tensions, that is to say, where negative age-based metastereotypes prevail (Finkelstein et al., 2015, 2013; Voyles, Finkelstein, & King, 2014). The stereotype threat experience entails the concern of confirming a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and it is likely to trigger coping mechanisms such as disengagement and disidentification (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Steele et al., 2002). Given that job withdrawal behaviors (e.g., lateness, absenteeism, and

turnover) arise on the basis of psychological withdrawal responses, understanding the work disengagement process is particularly important (Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, & Roberson, 2011). Moreover, the stereotype threat literature also suggests that due to the recursive nature of prolonged threat experience, stereotype threat may activate coping mechanisms such as disidentification with stigmatized workers feeling that the organization does not value their contribution and regards them as unwelcome organizational members (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Kray & Shirako, 2011; Steele et al., 2002).

While the mainstream stereotype threat research has mainly examined performance decrements in the lab context across many domains, some field-based studies conducted in workplace settings have examined the relationship between stereotype threat and job attitudes, turnover intention (e.g., von Hippel et al., 2013), workers' burnout and engagement (Bedyńska, & Żołnierczyk-Zreda, 2015), as well as job satisfaction (Roberson et al., 2003). Yet, more research is needed to examine whether stereotype threats' consequences such as disengagement and disidentification can be observed outside laboratorial settings, in particular in the manufacturing sector as it is still underanalyzed by ageism research. Moreover, most studies on stereotype threat conceptualize this threat as unidimensional and representing a concern for the stigmatized group (Shapiro, Williams, & Hambarchyan, 2013). One of the limitations of unidimensional conceptualizations of stereotype threat is that they either focus on concerns about the self (e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995) or concerns about group reputation (e.g., Aronson et al., 1999) without acknowledging the implications of pointing to different targets in their conceptualizations. Still, some authors contended that stereotype threat experience entails distinct processes that are contingent on the source and target of the threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). As such, the stereotype threat research agenda could benefit from more inquiry on the distinct forms of stereotype threat suggested within the multi-threat framework presented by Shapiro and Neuberg (2007).

In sum, taking into consideration the wide range of negative age stereotypes about older people (Posthuma & Campion, 2009) and the greying of the workforce (Kulik, 2014a), it is admitted that age-based stereotype threat is likely to be part of many older workers' experience (Kalokerinos et al., 2014). In this context, extending

the productive working life requires not only work interventions in accordance with older workers' attitudes, characteristics, and preferences (Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & De Lange, 2014), but also managerial actions to retain older workers (Walker, 2005) and deter age biases that may discourage these workers from remaining in the workforce (Bal et al., 2015). Although a growing body of literature has investigated stereotype threat nomological network (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Shapiro, 2011; Steele et al., 2002), a comprehensive view of age-related stereotype threat in the workplace is far from being accomplished. Thus, further research is needed regarding the:

- 1) Antecedents of age-based stereotype threats, namely older workers beliefs (negative age-based metastereotypes), and contextual factors (older workers representation);
- 2) Boundary conditions of age-based stereotype threats, such as age diversity beliefs, age group identification, and perceived human resources management (HRM) practices;
- 3) Outcomes of age-based stereotype threats and of negative age-based metastereotypes, namely negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification);
- 4) Multidimensionality of the age-based stereotype threat experience by exploring distinct targets of the threat (own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat).

1.2. Purpose of the study

Ageing workforces have been transforming the organizational landscape in most Western countries (Boehm et al., 2014; van Rooij, 2012). In the current demographic context, age is becoming a more salient social category for age-based sub-grouping and for self-categorizing, and a major diversity category in organizational settings (Pugh, Dietz, Brief, & Wiley, 2008). Against a background of widespread negative stereotypes about older workers (e.g., Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), intergenerational dynamics at the workplace might be at risk. Negative beliefs about

older workers are likely to be perceived by this age group as a stressor in the organizational environment. As a result, the concern that characterizes the age-based stereotype threat experience may trigger negative work attitudes (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011) that hinder the full use of older workers qualities, ultimately discouraging them from remaining in the workforce.

Given that existing accounts on workplace ageism have not treated the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers in much detail (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011), a much more systematic study on this topic needs to be undertaken, namely regarding stereotype threat antecedents, attitudinal outcomes, and boundary conditions. Moreover, most researchers do not take into account distinct forms of stereotype threat in their work, leaving aside a promising research approach (Shapiro et al., 2013).

Building on the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), on the age-based stereotype literature (Finkelstein et al., 2015, 2013; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), and on the HRM literature (e.g., Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015), this study aims to fill those research gaps by providing theoretical contributions to a better understanding of the nomological network of age-based stereotype threat in the workplace. In this way, this study intends to raise the managers' awareness of the potential harmful effects of negative workplace age stereotypes about older workers, and inform managers on how to increase the effectiveness of their age diversity management policies and practices.

Based on the theoretical frameworks abovementioned, this thesis has three major goals. The first aim of this study is to address the influence of situational factors (older workers representation) and older workers metabeliefs (negative age-based metastereotypes), on eliciting age-based stereotype threats. Following Johns' (2006) contention that organizational scholars have been relying too heavily on individual characteristics while ignoring the critical role situational factors often play in relevant organizational phenomena, the current study emphasizes the organizational context and the role age composition seems to play in the formation of ageist beliefs. Previous theoretical models assumed that the organizational distribution of employees may cue stereotype threat (McKay & Avery, 2006). In lab settings, underrepresentation was reported to trigger stereotype threat (Xavier, Fritzsche, Sanz, & Smith, 2014). For

instance, women's representation was associated with feelings of stereotype threat (Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003; von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes, 2011). In other words, the organization's demographic composition seems to signal to the employees, particularly to those who belong to stigmatized or minority groups, that they are undervalued in the organization (Bragger et al., 2014). Considering that age-based metastereotypes should be viewed as first order triggers of the stereotype threat process (Voyles et al., 2014), underrepresentation may also influence the age-based metastereotyping process since the age distribution of the organizational members makes age a more striking social category. It is, therefore, likely that older workers' age group membership and its salience in the workplace is associated with stereotype threat and negative metastereotypes. Given that some scholars claimed that stereotype threat is a multidimensional construct - which would possibly explain previous studies' inconsistent findings (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2013) - this research examines the extent to which negative age-based metastereotypes mediate the relationship between the representation of older workers and two forms of stereotype threat in the workplace: own-reputation and group-reputation. In this way, this study contributes to the ongoing debate about stereotype threat dimensionality (Xavier et al., 2014) and suggests the integration of negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threat on a nomological network of age-based threat in the workplace.

The second goal is to build on recent calls on the need for the assessment of the relationship between experiences of stereotype threat and disengagement/disidentification in the workplace (Walton, Murphy, & Ryan, 2015). The mediation role played by own-reputation threat in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes is examined, namely regarding older workers' work disengagement and organizational disidentification. By extension, the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and these two work attitudes is also looked at. Hence, this thesis tests a mediation model in which own-reputation threat plays a mediation role in the relationship between age metabeliefs and negative work attitudes. The invariance of this mediation model across different older workers' age groups is also looked at and the reasons thereto are twofold: it has been suggested that workers might cope differently with stereotype threat depending on the stage of response to it (Block et al., 2011), and the focus on chronological age may

be insufficient to understand the challenges and threats posed by the ageing process. Also, given scholars claims to consider multiple forms of stereotype threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), this research explores whether group-reputation threat mediated the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification.

The third aim of this study is to address some of the boundary conditions of the stereotype threat experience in the workplace. In this regard, the moderator role of age group identification, age diversity beliefs, and perceived HRM practices is explored. Given that the roles ingroup identification may play in ageist settings are still open to debate and that the stereotype threat consequences are contingent on the ingroup identification levels of its members (Steele et al., 2002), this research investigates the moderator role of age group identification in the relationship between age-based stereotype threat and negative work attitudes. Additionally, this study also explores whether age diversity beliefs moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats. Diversity beliefs reflect the extent to which an individual perceives diversity in a specific setting as an advantage rather than a risk (Homan, Greer, Jehn, & Koning, 2010). Similar to other diversity categories, such as cultural diversity, age diversity may be viewed as a double-edged sword that creates both opportunities and challenges for organizations and for employees. That being the case, differences in age diversity beliefs may play a relevant role in determining vulnerability to stereotype threat, and its outcomes. Cognitions about diversity may influence both positively and negatively the effects of objective age diversity. On the one hand, they can hamper identity threats posed by social categorization. On the other hand, negative diversity beliefs make age bias more salient reinforcing its harmful consequences. Finally, this study investigates the role of perceived HRM practices as moderators of the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats. Following recent calls to further investigate the effects of HRM practices on workplace outcomes (Avery & McKay, 2010), this study contends that age-awareness HRM practices, that is, practices explicitly targeted to older workers (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015) exacerbate the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats. Conversely, general HRM practices like recognition and respect are likely to lessen those relationships. By putting the

spotlight on older workers' beliefs about other age-groups' beliefs (age-based metastereotypes), and on how older workers interpret age management efforts, this study hopes to overcome the prevailing view that has been relying heavily on managers' beliefs (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

Given that the cross-fertilization between disciplinary silos is a key condition to the development of an organizational age-related framework, the following sections will provide more detailed information on the theoretical and practical usefulness of crossing insights from the social identity approach, the stereotype threat framework, and the HRM literature to better understand workplace ageism among older workers.

1.3. Definition of older worker

Ageism in the workplace is embodied by biases that target predominantly older workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Posthuma et al., 2012). As such, any approach to address ageism in the workplace has to establish age group boundaries from the outset. The *older worker* has been defined in many different ways, being the statistical and legal definitions the most traditional ones. In fact, the statistical office of the European Union, the Eurostat, defines older workers as those aged 55-64 in employment and uses this demographic age bracket for comparisons between EU countries. Other organizations such as Eurofound (2012) use the same criterion, whereas the OECD (2006) definition is more wide-ranging as it includes workers aged over 50. Although there is no agreed definition of *older worker* (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2010), scholars have suggested the age threshold of 53 years old (Fula, Amaral, & Abraão, 2012; Maurer, Wrenn, & Weiss, 2003; McCarthy, Heraty, Cross, & Cleveland, 2014). However, age group classifications may be influenced by contextual factors such as the industry, the national culture or the economic climate in which they arise (Guillaume et al., 2013; Maurer et al., 2003; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Shiu, Hassan, & Parry, 2015). Given that this study targets the stereotype experience of blue-collar older workers of the manufacturing sector, a sector characterized by physically demanding jobs, a downwards adjustment of the abovementioned age threshold is recommended. Thus, in the empirical approach, older workers were defined as workers aged 50 years or more. Despite the fact that any chronological

operationalization of age has limitations since the ageing process is multifaceted (Roundtree, 2011), and that calls have been made for greater attention to constructs such as organizational age or subjective age (Kooij et al., 2014), an objective criterion seems to be the most appropriate for these research purposes, as it guarantees that all research participants are envisioning the same age group.

Notwithstanding ageism pervasiveness in the workplace (European Commission, 2012a; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), there has been less focus on preventing it than on other bias associated with race and gender stereotypes (Fineman, 2011). As such, ageism in the workplace is a phenomenon worthy of scholars and practitioners attention.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review relevant for this research. In Chapter 3, the theoretical background and research gaps are identified, and research hypotheses are formulated. In addition, this chapter outlines the research design and the methodological approach followed in the two steps of the study. Chapter 4 presents the quantitative data analyses and results of each step and Chapter 5 brings together and discusses the study's main findings. General conclusions and limitations, as well as suggestions for further research and implications for practice are presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the extant literature on ageism in the workplace, with a focus on the stereotype threat framework. For the purposes of this research, the chapter is structured in sections and subsections that summarize the state of the art regarding the age-based stereotype threat framework.

2.1. Ageism

The term “ageism” was first introduced by Butler (1969) to describe a set of conceptions about society and work age division embodied by attitudes and discriminatory practices usually against older people. Although ageism may also target young individuals, recent reports (European Commission, 2012b) showed that age discrimination is much more widely believed to affect Europeans aged over 55 (45%) than those under 30 years old (18%). In addition, the workplace is the context in which age discrimination is most likely to occur (European Commission, 2012a).

Unlike sexism or racism, ageism deals with flexible and subjective dividing lines that draw separation between age groups (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). Age group boundaries are moveable and set out by “imaginary lines” (Fula et al., 2012, p. 300) that are contingent, for instance, on the national context (Harper, Khan, Saxena, & Leeson, 2006). Besides flexible and subjective dividing lines between groups, ageism differs from gender and racial biases in other ways. It has been argued that ageism is more implicit than any other form of stereotypical belief or discriminatory attitude since there is not clearly any intention to harm the elderly individuals and because “there are no hate groups that target the elderly as there are hate groups that target members of religious and racial and ethnic groups” (Levy & Banaji, 2002, p. 50). Moreover, social disapproval of ageist attitudes seems almost absent because “ageism, unlike racism, does not provoke shame” (p. 51). Another factor contributing to ageism distinctiveness is age’s state of permanent flux. Unlike other groups that are negatively stereotyped based on gender, race, or ethnicity, age group membership emerges as a stigmatizing characteristic; age is not a dimension of stigma until a certain point in one’s life cycle

(Shapiro, 2011). Additionally, age group relations are not grounded in stable groupings, age group membership is temporary, and thus it seems reasonable to expect that the nature of age group relations deviates to some extent from traditional intergroup relations frameworks (Cary, Chasteen, & Cadieux, 2013).

Ageism encompasses three interlinked dimensions: discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes (Butler, 1969). Regardless of the dimension under analysis, ageism represents a bias that undervalues individuals based on their perceived age group membership. Stereotypes and prejudices correspond to the cognitive and affective dimensions of ageism respectively and underpin a more visible dimension which is expressed by age discriminatory behaviors. Age discrimination and negative age stereotypes seem to endure despite all the awareness and efforts to deter workplace ageism (Ng & Feldman, 2012). One of the reasons thereto is the fact that negative workplace stereotypes about older workers tend to reflect prevalent societal stereotypes of older people (McCann & Giles, 2002). In modern societies, mass media have often been a vehicle of negative beliefs about advancing age (van Selm & Van der Heijden, 2014). Pejorative linguistic references that correspond to paternalistic views regarding older people can easily be found on television, newspapers, books, and the internet (van Selm & Van der Heijden, 2014). These portrayals contribute to maintain negative stereotypical views of older people with spillover effects to workplaces (Shiu et al., 2015). Hence, negative stereotypes about older workers raise a serious threat to older workers' continued well-being. Two reasons can justify this statement: firstly, in age-segregated Western societies intergenerational contact tends to be less frequent (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005), and perspective-taking as well as positive contact between age groups are both linked to decreased vulnerability to stereotype threat among older individuals (Abrams, Eller, & Bryant, 2006). Secondly, in contemporary European societies employment is a major source of reputation and social status (Shiu et al., 2015). Given that most Western cultures share the assumption that younger workers are more desirable members of the workforce than older workers (Stone & Tetrick, 2013), older workers employability may be at risk. Research findings seem to confirm these threats. Ageist workplaces pose a serious challenge to older workers retention since perceived discrimination toward older workers was found to be negatively associated with the desired retirement age (Schermuly, Deller, & Büsch, 2014). The

challenge for HRM gets even more acute as perceived discrimination toward older workers was associated with high levels of continuance commitment and a subsequent increase in the intention to retire (Snape & Redman, 2003). Furthermore, given that continuance commitment is due to the awareness of the high costs of leaving the organization and/or to the perceived lack of other job opportunities (Meyer & Allen, 1997), discrimination toward older workers could lead older workers to feel “trapped” in the organization.

Given its triggering role, the stereotypical dimension of ageism is the central focus of this thesis, in particular regarding negative stereotypes about older workers, their antecedents, consequences, and boundary conditions in the workplace.

2.1.1. Workplace age stereotypes about older workers

Demographic characteristics such as age are among the primary perceptual dimensions people use to infer seemingly homogeneous or diverse contexts. Age provides a quick shortcut for people to group themselves and others in meaningful and salient social categories. Individuals self-categorize and categorize others into groups as long as categorization dimensions are meaningful and salient to them (Turner et al., 1987). For instance, age diverse workplaces are likely to trigger age group comparisons as age becomes more salient and age differences are enhanced. Importantly, over time, as interpersonal relations develop, overt characteristics, in tandem with stereotypical information tend to lose relevance as primal criteria for social grouping. As people get to know each other better, more information is obtained, and as such, underlying characteristics like attitudes, preferences, and values tend to substitute initial superficial categorizations and group stereotypes based on overt characteristics (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). Still, age continues to be widely used as reasonable proxy of people’s similarity in attitudes or belief systems (Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992), and workplace age stereotypes seem to endure (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

Workplace age stereotypes describe widely shared beliefs and expectations about workers and their organizational behavior based on their chronological age or perceived age (Posthuma et al., 2012). Stereotypes are based on the process of categorization and group membership and they are a central aspect of intergroup

behavior because they allow group members to make sense of particular intergroup relationships (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). While most stereotypes about older workers are negatively biased, the whole picture includes also favorable beliefs. On a positive tone, the older worker has been stereotyped as more agreeable (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002), more dependable, loyal and stable than his younger counterparts (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). In addition, Ng and Feldman (2008) emphasized that older workers tend to exhibit greater citizenship behaviors and less counterproductive work behaviors than their younger colleagues.

Although positive age stereotypes about older workers were identified (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Ng & Feldman, 2008), negative stereotypes about the older workers' competence are prevalent in many societies. For that reason, older workers are usually seen as less competent than their younger colleagues (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Posthuma et al., 2012). Still, it is worth noting that there are significant country differences in the perceptions of older people competence. For instance, Bowen and Skirbekk (2013) showed that country differences are partly explained by older people participation in remunerated or volunteer work. In the same vein, Bertolino, Truxillo, and Fraccaroli (2013) found that older workers were not considered less competent than their younger co-workers in a study with administrative employees in Italy. According to Bertolino et al. (2013), these findings may be due to country's culture specificities, namely the high respect held for older workers in Italy. In addition, Chiu, Chan, Snape, and Redman (2001) suggested that negative stereotyping about older workers seems to be more striking in Western rather than in Eastern settings, and several scholars have claimed more research attention is required to the national and cultural background in which the organizations operate as it may influence ageism research findings (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Shiu et al., 2015).

Notwithstanding the above cross-country differences, recent meta-analytical work showed that older workers are usually seen as less motivated, more resistant and less willing to change, less trusting, less healthy, more vulnerable to work-family imbalance, and generally less willing to participate in training (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Interestingly, the only stereotype that gathered consistent empirical support was the latter. Along the same vein, research findings on another stereotype about older workers widely reported in the age stereotyping literature - the poor performance stereotype,

provided evidence that task performance does not seem to be influenced by age differences (Ng & Feldman, 2008). These findings seem to suggest that some negative stereotypes about older workers are not based on real empirical grounds (Stone & Tetrick, 2013). Still, older workers are likely to wonder whether managers and co-workers endorse those stereotypes and they fear being judged and treated according to them (King et al., 2008).

These negative stereotypes are dangerous at various levels. At an organizational level, they provide the basis for prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviors in both organizational personnel decisions and organizational day-to-day life. At the micro-level, negative stereotypes may lay the foundations for self-fulfilling prophecies based on stigmatized group membership self-categorization (Gaillard & Desmette, 2010; Hertel, van der Heijden, De Lange, & Deller, 2013), and for experiences of age-based stereotype threat (Kaloerinos et al., 2014). Additionally, when perceived as psychological threats, the activation of negative age stereotypes in the workplace, besides influencing workplace relationships, may also influence stereotyped individuals' attitudes toward the organization. Since meta-analytical findings indicated that negative age stereotypes influence behavioral outcomes to a larger extent than positive age stereotypes do (Meisner, 2012), the harmful consequences of negative age stereotypes must be taken seriously. And even though age plays a pivotal role in the social categorization process and in group stereotyping, age bias origins and effects are far from being fully understood (Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

2.2. An overview of frameworks about ageing in the workplace

Greying workforces available in the labor market (Smith, Morgan, King, Hebl, & Peddie, 2012) in tandem with the unsustainability of the early retirement scheme (Eurofound, 2013) have been increasing older workers figures in most workplaces. As the workforce ages, managing age diversity and negative age cognitions require specific attention (Walker, 2005). Age management encompasses “measures that combat age barriers and/or promote age diversity” (Naegele & Walker, 2006, p. 3) and its central aim is to foster an inclusive climate (Guillaume et al., 2013; Scott, Heathcote, & Gruman, 2011) in which all age cohorts can express their diverse qualities. Given that

workers abilities and needs change with age, HRM practices should accommodate these age-related differences (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015; Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & De Lange, 2010; Kooij et al., 2014; van Rooij, 2012). For instance, to reduce older workers task variety may be beneficial for organizational goals because older workers, unlike their younger colleagues, tend to undervalue job enlargement policies (Zaniboni, Truxillo, Fraccaroli, McCune, & Bertolino, 2014). Besides, because negative stereotypes about older workers are widespread, stereotypes may most likely be interpreted by older workers as workplace stressors, and thus these workers well-being and performance may be at risk.

In order to better understand some of the challenges of an ageing workforce, several frameworks have been suggested. Alongside investigations about the influence of biological processes on age-related decline of older workers skills (Horton, Baker, Pearce, & Deakin, 2010), two major research areas stand out (Stone & Tetrick, 2013). One of them aims at understanding older workers' needs and motivations in order to best craft age management efforts, and the other focuses on ageism at the workplace and its implications for older workers.

Life-span theories such as the selection, optimization and compensation theory (Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999), the socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999), and the social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) are among the conceptual frameworks scholars have been using to examine the needs, motivations, and preferences of the older worker, and to propose age management efforts to retain older workers (Kooij et al., 2014). Research in this area has showed that organizations may develop different age diversity management strategies to deal with the increasing organizational age diversity (Pugh et al., 2008; Wegge, Roth, Neubach, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008). For instance, in their influential qualitative work, Ely and Thomas (2001) identified three perspectives the organizations may adopt in managing diversity: the discrimination and fairness paradigm, the access and legitimacy paradigm, and the integration and learning paradigm. These categories are associated with defensive, accommodative, and proactive strategic responses to diversity in the organizational context respectively. When an organization conceptualizes diversity as a problem and/or as a threat to the status quo, the likelihood of adopting a defensive approach based on stereotyped personnel decisions increases,

whereas within an integration and learning view, managers acknowledge differences and similarities as a source of insight and skill. The integration and learning perspective seems the most appropriate for providing solid benefits from diversity mainly due to its collective commitment to integrate multiple social identities (Ely & Thomas, 2001). This perspective, also known as the resource-based view of diversity, has been linked to positive personal consequences such as employee satisfaction and loyalty to the firm and to organizational desirable outcomes like retention, creativity, and performance (Smith et al., 2012). It does so by the development of effective diversity measures at the recruitment, job design, retention, training, career mentoring, and compensation levels (Smith et al., 2012).

On a different vein, scholars have been building on the stereotyping literature to focus on ageism at work, particularly on the extent to which stereotypes influence workplace decisions about older workers. For instance, holding negative stereotypes about older workers competence is likely to result in prejudiced personnel selection decisions that affect older workers opportunities in finding employment which may end up in age discrimination (OECD, 2006). Since age-related managers' beliefs play a chief role in shaping employees' opportunities, well-being, and organizational attachment, most studies on ageism at work have been carried out to shed light on the effects of managers' age bias regarding HRM major decisions such as hiring, training, performance appraisals, promotions and dismissal. Most of the research conducted within this perspective reflects the managers' point of view (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007; Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Likewise, many organizational diversity management strategies have been relying too heavily on training programs aimed to change organizational decision makers' attitudes and behaviors without proper attention being given to broader societal issues (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). It is worth noting, however, that even if human resources (HR) managers were able to eradicate all possible age biases that affect their decision-making process, stereotypes would still exist both within and beyond organization's borders and beyond since they are deep-rooted in the culture. In fact, at the same time that the organizational perspective toward age diversity may influence older workers' everyday work experience, at the macro level age-related beliefs in work settings are slowly being shaped by societal stereotypes (Shiu et al., 2015). As a result, when both the societal level and the organizational level echo an

undesirable view of older workers, it is likely that negative societal stereotypes are made salient and stereotype threats are more easily triggered (Roberson et al., 2003).

Given that both areas of research share a managerial focus, so far there has been little discussion about the older workers' viewpoint of the ageing experience in the workplace. By shifting the focus from managers to the environment, in particular to the social relationships in which workers are embedded, researchers would add value to current age diversity management approaches. As workers belong to different social groups, workplace interactions are not fully comprised if research attention is limited to interpersonal relationships. Intergroup relationships should also be an object of analysis allowing research to attain a broader understanding of workplace ageism. Hence, more research on the older workers' perceptions and metaperceptions regarding the triggers, boundary conditions, and attitudinal consequences of stereotypes about older workers needs to be undertaken. Furthermore, it has been suggested that more than age management practices' face value, it is the workers' perceptions about the value of these practices that influence their work attitudes and behaviors (Gerhart, Wright, & McMahan, 2000). As such, research focusing on the older workers' perceptions of age management practices may inform managers on how to best craft those practices in order to retain older workers.

So to fill the abovementioned gaps, it is argued that the stereotype threat framework is a key resource. More than merely framing stereotyping as an individual level problem, stereotype threat literature offers contextual and situational interpretations of stereotypes antecedents and effects (Steele, 1997), shedding some more light on a social issue of immense importance.

Steele and Aronson (1995) defined stereotype threat as a predicament of being judged and treated poorly in settings where a negative stereotype about one's ingroup applies. Importantly, more than merely framing stereotyping as an individual level problem, the stereotype threat literature offers contextual and situational interpretations of societal stereotypes' effects (Steele, 1997). Scholars have recently suggested extending stereotype threat research to field settings such as the workplace (e.g. Kalokerinos et al., 2014; see also Kang & Inzlicht, 2014; Roberson & Kim, 2014).

In their seminal study with African American students, Steele and Aronson (1995) found that stereotype threat undermined the academic test performance of

individuals who belong to negatively stereotyped groups, as long as their ingroup identity becomes salient. Stereotype threat was later associated with the arousal of individual coping mechanisms, like disengagement and disidentification from the stereotyped domain (Steele, 1997; Steele et al., 2002). Accordingly, stereotype threat is a situational concern that arises from the risk of confirming a negative stereotype about one of the social identities one holds in a given point in time. As such, the stereotype threat framework has deep foundations in the social identity approach (Roberson & Kim, 2014).

2.2.1. Social identity approach

Directly observable characteristics like age provide a quick shortcut for people to group themselves and others in meaningful and salient social categories. Analyzing in hindsight the social identity approach, references to age cohorts can be found from this approach early stages (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The social identity approach is an expression used to refer to hypotheses and contributions generated by the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and by the self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987). Social identity theory posits that an individual has not one personal self, but two distinct aspects of the self-concept: personal identity and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Personal identity refers to people's internalized definition of themselves as individuals, whereas social identity refers to "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). In other words, as with the personal self, group memberships are important parts of one's identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social identity comprises three central components: cognitive centrality, ingroup affect, and ingroup ties (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Cognitive centrality is rooted in the importance of group membership to the self-concept; ingroup affect is based on emotions that arise as a result of an evaluation about group membership; and ingroup ties relates to the ties that bind the individual to a certain group and that reflect his or her sense of belonging and inclusion. Hence, identification with the ingroup implies not

only self-categorization in the ingroup (Turner et al., 1987), but also the value and emotional significance attached to that membership. Building on the three aforementioned components, social identity theory posits that having defined themselves in terms of a particular social identity, individuals tend to evaluate members of the own ingroup more positively than outgroup members (ingroup favoritism) and also to derogate the latter, a phenomenon known as intergroup bias (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is worth noting that this bias is not an inevitable consequence of group membership. The authors (1979, p. 41) cautioned that it only occurs when three conditions come across: a) a strong identification with the ingroup; b) comparison and competition with the outgroup in valued dimensions, and; c) the perceived outgroup salience to the ingroup status.

Since each individual belongs to many different groups throughout his or her lifespan, individuals possess more than one social identity at any given point in time. Therefore, different group memberships are likely to evoke unequal levels of identification as they transmit different levels of self-esteem to individuals. As such, individuals strive for a positive social identity and consequently they identify with groups that enable their self-enhancement and increased self-esteem. When the need for a positive social identity cannot be met, individuals engage in self-enhancement strategies. Tajfel and Turner (1979) broached on individualized strategies and collective ones. Through *individual mobility* individuals seek to leave the ingroup and join other groups with more positive connotations (provided that the stigmatizable characteristic is seen as controllable and that group boundaries are permeable). There are also psychological and behavioral strategies of collective nature that aim to transform the ingroup into a more positive group when group boundaries are impermeable (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). *Social creativity* and especially *social competition* are the collective positive distinctiveness strategies that have received the greatest amount of attention. The former can be achieved through three types of strategies: a) comparing the ingroup and outgroup in a new dimension favorable to the ingroup; b) redefining the value dimension of the comparison turning a disadvantage into an advantage; and c) changing the outgroup of comparison, in particular avoiding comparison with high-status outgroups. Whereas *social creativity* does not imply real change in the group's social position, *social competition* may give rise to conflict since group members directly

compete trying to reverse ingroup and outgroup positions on valued dimensions. Collective self-enhancement strategies clearly demonstrate that social identities derived from group memberships are “relational and comparative” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16), for it means that the status of the group or feelings attached to group memberships can change with the comparison group.

Moreover, social identity helps individuals to define themselves and evaluate who they are, how to behave and to predict how they will be treated by others. One of the motives for individuals to identify with social groups is precisely the need for uncertainty reduction. People can cognitively minimize uncertainty in, for instance, complex age diverse workplaces, by making comparisons between age groups and inferring from age group memberships, co-workers attitudes and behaviors.

Along with social identity theory, self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) is a fundamental part of the social identity approach. Self-categorization theory postulates that individuals self-categorize and categorize others into groups as long as categorization dimensions are meaningful and salient to them. In this way, the diversity of attributes like age contributes to separate the population of social units (e.g., organizations) in classes such as “old” and “young”. Diversity is a multifaceted construct that may be defined as the presence and distribution of differences between members of a social unit with respect to a common attribute (Harrison & Klein, 2007). For this reason, age diversity refers to the heterogeneity of a group or organization with respect to its members’ age (Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Given that organizational diversity research has produced inconsistent findings, scholars suggested that “diversity is not one thing but three things” (Harrison & Klein, 2007, p. 1200) and proposed three distinctive indexes of diversity in organizations: variety, disparity, and separation. Variety is based on a resource-based perspective that points out the benefits age diversity may bring to the table, since differences in knowledge, distinct functional backgrounds, tenure or seniority may add value to the organizational decision-making process (Wegge et al., 2012). Disparity relies on distributive justice and tournament theory to address (in)equality in the distribution of socially valued assets in the organization (e.g., pay, status, and social power). Finally, the main arguments for a separation view of diversity in organizations lie on the tenets of the social identity approach (Harrison & Klein, 2007). As age becomes more salient in age diverse

workplaces, intergroup comparisons are likely to be triggered, thus enhancing age difference effects. Furthermore, self-categorization theory is also interested in addressing the consequences of perceiving people at a group level since group categorizations shape one's social behavior. In fact, empirical evidence has suggested that categorization processes raise potential for conflicts, stereotyping, and discrimination among organizational members (van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

In a nutshell, the social identity approach emphasizes that group memberships, self-categorization, and social identities play a crucial role in intergroup relations as they shape individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Individuals are intrinsically motivated to achieve and maintain a positive social identity and consequently they identify with groups which enable their self-enhancement, and thus increase their self-esteem. It is not surprising then that tenets from this conceptual framework have generated several of the building propositions of the stereotype threat framework, thereby contributing to explain the extent to which ageism influences older workers day-to-day work life.

2.3. Stereotype threat framework

The original theorizing of the stereotype threat framework suggested that, besides performance impairment, stereotype threat could lead to disengagement from the task domain, and that repeated exposure to social identity threats could influence the identity development of stigmatized group members (Steele, 1997).

A large and growing body of literature has showed the stereotype threat nomological network theoretical richness and practical usefulness (Block et al., 2011; Kray & Shirako, 2011; Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Shapiro, 2011; Shapiro et al., 2013; Steele et al., 2002). Even though most stereotype threat research has primarily examined performance decrements in lab settings, some field-based studies in the workplace have been conducted, for instance, to explore the relationship between age-based stereotype threat, commitment, and turnover intentions (e.g., von Hippel et al., 2013).

Yet, stereotype threat research in the workplace has initially been focused on the role of gender and race stereotypes. However, taking into consideration the widespread

negative age stereotypes about older workers (Posthuma et al., 2012), and also the findings that suggest that older workers contend with social identity threats in organizational settings (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007; Gaillard & Desmette, 2010), it is very likely that stereotype threat is a common part of many older workers' experience (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011). As such, in recent years, scholars have turned their attention to the identification of the antecedents and consequences of age-related stereotype threat in organizations (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011). In addition, scholars have claimed that greater attention needs to be directed toward disadvantaged groups other than women or black workers since there are reasons to believe that not all stigmatized groups respond to stereotype threat in similar ways (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). Although age has only recently become a relevant social category under the scope of stereotype threat researchers, it is likely that the meaning of age in the workplace is a common day-to-day concern of older workers particularly in the context of an aging shadow (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

Taken together, these arguments suggest the need for more scholarship that systematically examines the role played by age stereotyping on stigmatized organizational members and, herewith, provide a better understanding of the stereotype threat key feature - the concern of being stigmatized (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

In addition to theoretical contributions, the stereotype threat framework (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and, in particular, the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) may provide sound practical recommendations for managing an ageing and increasingly age diverse workforce. In this vein, a brief overview of the individual and situational triggers, boundary conditions, and attitudinal outcomes of stereotype threat is particularly relevant for the current study.

2.3.1. Multi-threat framework

One of the greatest controversies in stereotype threat research regards the stereotype threat dimensionality (Xavier et al., 2014). Stereotype threat researchers often conceptualize the stereotype threat construct as unidimensional and regarding the concern about representing a stigmatized group or the concern about one's self-image (Shapiro et al., 2013). Hence, most stereotype threat studies have been conducted and

had their results interpreted according to the assumption that stereotype threat has only one dimension. For instance, Steele and Aronson (1995, p. 797) operationalized their study with African American students under the assumption that stereotype threat is a “risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one’s group”. The original definition of stereotype threat by Steele and Aronson (1995) refers then to concerns about one’s personal abilities. Yet, it seems that not all unidimensional views envision the same target of stereotype threat in their empirical work. In fact, whereas Steele and Aronson (1995) focused on the concern targeted to the self-image of the stigmatized individual, Aronson et al. (1999), for example, focused on the concern about representing poorly a stigmatized group, that is to say, a concern about damaging the ingroup reputation. In other words, stereotype threats may target different aspects such as the stigmatized worker self-image or his/her ingroup reputation.

According to some scholars, these differences in stereotype threat’s conceptualization are likely to explain previous studies’ inconsistent findings (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2013). More importantly, these differences highlight the need for a multidimensional perspective on stereotype threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2013). Unlike most researchers, Shapiro and Neuberg (2007, p. 108) do not consider stereotype threat as a unidimensional construct, “but rather six qualitatively distinct core stereotype threats”. On this basis, Shapiro and Neuberg (2007) proposed a multi-threat framework which posits that stereotype threats take different forms as there are multiple combinations between the target of the threat (the self-image or the ingroup reputation) and the source of the threat (the self, outgroup members, or ingroup members). The target of the threat refers to whether the concern about confirming a negative stereotype impacts the individual’s own-reputation (own-reputation threat) or the ingroup image (group-reputation threat), whereas the origin of the concern may be oneself, outgroup members, or ingroup members. As a result, stereotype threat may take the following forms: a) self-concept threat, (b) own-reputation threat (outgroup as source), (c) own-reputation threat (ingroup as source), (d) group-concept threat, (e) group-reputation threat (outgroup as source), and (f) group-reputation threat (ingroup as source).

Recent research has highlighted the usefulness of a multidimensional approach by suggesting that the effectiveness of different stereotype threat interventions in

reducing stigmatized individuals' vulnerability to stereotype threat is contingent on the target of the threat (Haslam, Eggins, & Reynolds, 2003; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2013). For instance, in their experimental work, Shapiro et al. (2013) showed that ingroup role model interventions were only successful at protecting against group-as-target stereotype threats. This study showed that concerns about confirming the negative stereotype about the ingroup may be reduced through the presentation of an ingroup role model who refutes the stereotype. Remarkably, the effectiveness of this approach does not necessarily involve the physical presence of a role model. Insofar as role models' salience and competence visibility is fostered, for instance by providing access to information about effective ingroup members, stereotype threat could be attenuated (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). The contribution from role model interventions to alleviate anxiety associated with stereotype-relevant situations has received considerable empirical support (Shapiro et al., 2013). In practical terms, these findings support the notion that contexts in which stigmatized minority members could get easier access to role models such as work related network groups are likely to increase social support, thereby hampering group-reputation threats, and helping organizations to manage minority employees (Friedman & Holtom, 2002).

On the other hand, self-as-target stereotype threats were only buffered by other type of interventions such as self-affirmation. Indeed, self-affirmation was found to be one of the mechanisms that specifically protects the self against stereotype threats (Shapiro et al., 2013). It is believed that the debilitating anxiety, underperformance, and other negative reactions instigated by stereotype threat in a given domain could be mitigated by emphasizing and affirming valued attributes in important domains other than the threatening one. All in all, to be effective stereotype threat interventions have to address the specific target of the threat. Taken together, these findings provide support for further research on the antecedents and outcomes of different forms of stereotype threat, which in turn may lead to more effective stereotype threat interventions (Shapiro et al., 2013; Xavier et al., 2014).

Given that the stereotype threat experience may entail distinct processes contingent on the target of the threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), and that targets' vulnerability and reactions to social identity threats are contingent on the underlying form of stereotype threat (Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2013), this research

addresses two forms of stereotype threat: own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat. It focuses on some of the triggers, moderators, and consequences of both forms of threat, and puts forward theoretical and practical implications for workplace interventions.

2.3.2. Individual triggers of stereotype threat

Research has considered several individual differences that have the potential to prompt stereotype threat, such as stigma consciousness, ingroup identification or domain identification (Steele et al., 2002). Recently, Voyles et al. (2014) proposed metastereotypes as first order triggers of the stereotype threat experience.

Stigma consciousness is the chronic expectation that one will be stereotyped (Pinel, 1999), and it is suggested that it will likely have behavioral consequences in stereotype-relevant situations. Individuals high in stigma consciousness are more vigilant to perceived stigma against their own group and tend to circumvent stereotype-relevant settings. In addition to variations across individuals, stigma consciousness might also be situationally prompted. Irrespective of whether vigilance is cued by the situation or by an individual trait, vigilance might be demanding and stressful (Steele et al., 2002). Still, the perceived probability of being the target of a stereotype does not inevitably imply stereotypical beliefs internalization. Unlike stereotype threat, stigma consciousness does not include the stereotyped targets concern of behaviorally confirming the stereotype. It only reflects an expectation regardless of the actual behavior. However, variations in how chronically self-conscious stereotyped individuals are of their stigmatized status may provide valuable predictions about their vulnerability to stereotype threat. For instance, Brown and Pinel (2003) found that under stereotype-threatening situations, women high in stigma consciousness are worst performers on a math test than women low in stigma consciousness. Individual differences in stigma consciousness might also explain whether intergroup contact situations are foreseen as positive experiences or as social identity threats (Pinel, 1999). Individuals with lower levels of stigma consciousness would likely engage in intergroup contact situations without reluctance, whereas those high on stigma consciousness levels would prefer to avoid them. Additionally, in a time of financial crisis in which

social groups are competing for scarce resources (e.g., employment), social tensions may undermine intergroup contact positive effects. Struggles over power and resources in the labor market are likely to exacerbate group status asymmetries, which in turn prevent intergroup contact from yielding positive results.

Pinel's (1999) work made several theoretical and practical contributions to the stereotyping literature, in particular to the individual-differences perspective on stereotype targets. It emphasized differences between people regarding the extent to which they expect to be stereotyped. In this way, stigma consciousness has proved to be one of the individual differences that may influence the stereotype threat experience.

Also, strong identification with a domain such as the workplace could contribute to exacerbate social threats. Steele (1997) claims that differences in domain identification also play a relevant role in determining vulnerability to stereotype threat. Domain identification is elicited by domain's perceived attractiveness, subjective importance, task feasibility and the prospect of favorable rewards (Steele, 1997). Some authors (Steele, 1997; Steele et al., 2002) suggested that members of stigmatized groups that are strongly identified with the stereotyped domain are more affected by stereotype threat than those who are weakly identified with the domain in question. Highly domain identified individuals include the domain in their self-definition and therefore invest considerable time and effort to succeed in that area. Since individuals strongly identified with a particular domain are highly motivated to perform well and truly care about their performance, it is on them that stereotype threats detrimental effects are most notorious (Smith & White, 2001). In a similar vein, if someone disregards performance outcomes in a domain, if it is not self-relevant, frustration associated with bad results and underachievement does not threaten one's self-evaluation.

Another individual characteristic that also plays a relevant role in determining vulnerability to stereotype threat is the level of ingroup identification. Whether stereotyped individuals believe the stereotype is truly self-describing or not is irrelevant. According to Steele et al. (2002), stereotype threat does not depend on individual traits or expectations that could suggest especially stereotype-threat prone individuals. On the contrary, stereotype threat is situational as it can happen in any situation as long as the member of a negative stereotyped group identifies with it. Ingroup identification refers to the extent to which an individual perceives that he/she belongs to that group and that

he/she identifies himself/herself with such membership (Barbier, Dardenne, & Hansez, 2013). Perceived stigma against the ingroup prompts different emotional responses depending on the ingroup identification levels such that vulnerability to stereotype threat is amplified when individuals identify strongly with the stereotyped group (Steele et al., 2002). However, as distinct forms of threat were suggested, it is likely that ingroup identification does not have the same triggering effect on all of them (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). For instance, whereas ingroup identification levels may play a significant role in determining vulnerability to group-reputation threat, ingroup identification seems irrelevant in eliciting own-reputation threat because this form of threat is targeted to one's self-image and not to the ingroup reputation.

Given that ingroup identification is one of the boundary conditions of the stereotype threat consequences in the workplace in the current study, more details on the role this construct plays on the stereotype threat nomological network are presented in 2.3.4.2..

2.3.2.1. Age-based metastereotypes

Against a background of widespread negative age stereotypes about older workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), and with organizational age diversity increasing (Pugh et al., 2008), researchers have been turning their attention to stereotype threat triggers other than stigma consciousness, domain identification, or ingroup identification. Current research efforts on these antecedents do not seem to address all the challenges posed by an age diverse workforce, in particular, in ageist workplaces. Ageist workplaces are organizational environments in which social exchanges between co-workers are often rooted in negative age-related stereotypes about older workers. In this type of contexts, it is admitted that attributed beliefs about social groups may trigger the stereotype threat experience (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Voyles et al., 2014). Moreover, the stereotype literature has suggested that in order to better understand intergroup relations, research efforts on one's beliefs of the stereotypes of the ingroup held by outgroup members (metastereotypes) are as important as research efforts on stereotypes about one's ingroup (Judd, Park, Yzerbyt, Gordijn, & Muller, 2005). More systematic research on age-based metastereotypes is therefore likely to benefit the

workplace ageism scholarship, in particular because perceivers tend to attribute to others more prejudiced intergroup beliefs than to their own prejudice (Judd et al., 2005).

Finkelstein et al. (2013) defined age-based metastereotypes as individual beliefs concerning stereotypical beliefs that other age groups hold about the individual's ingroup. This type of metabeliefs is in part responsible for older workers awareness of the workplace stereotypes held by other age groups regarding their own group (Shiu et al., 2015). Indeed, one's beliefs about how others perceive and evaluate one's ingroup are just as important as evaluating others in the workplace (King et al., 2008). Moreover, individuals that are aware of the stereotypes others held regarding their ingroup tend to expect others to perceive them in stereotypical terms (Krueger, 1996). In this way, metastereotypes influence older workers' sensemaking process in the workplace environment, in particular, regarding the quality of intergenerational contact. Hence, metastereotypes contribute to the construction of a relational knowledge structure that affects older workers' mind-set and, therefore, influences the way older workers interpret the workplace conditions (Shiu et al., 2015).

Metastereotypes are cognitive in nature and unlike stereotype threat, do not necessarily involve worry or fear of being stigmatized (Voyles et al., 2014). Metastereotypes, like stereotypes, are beliefs derived from everyday social perceptions at work that involve social groups, whereas stereotype threats refer to the reaction elicited by the awareness of a negative stereotype about the ingroup (Finkelstein et al., 2015). To put it differently, stereotype threats may be considered as potential emotional and/or behavioral outcomes of metastereotyping and so it would probably be more appropriate to describe them as metastereotype threats rather than stereotype threats. Hence, to further understand age dynamics in the workplace, research needs to be developed on older workers' age-based metastereotypes. This line of research is even more important in the context of ageing workforces, given that the quality of the relationships with colleagues is among the most significant drivers of older workers' job satisfaction (Drabe, Hauff, & Richter, 2015).

A promising framework for understanding age-based metastereotyping in work contexts was recently presented by Finkelstein et al. (2015). Finkelstein et al. (2015) included in the model a set of general research propositions regarding age-based metastereotyping in the workplace antecedents (e.g., age identification, context),

outcomes (e.g., conflict, threat), and moderators (e.g., core self-evaluations, interventions). The age-based metastereotype activation model predicts that workers may interpret metastereotypes, either positive or negative, as threats or as challenges (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Still, the concern elicited by a negative stereotype about one's age group is probably preceded by the belief that an outgroup holds a negative stereotype about one's group. Thus, in line with Voyles et al. (2014), negative age-based metastereotypes should be viewed as first order triggers of the stereotype threat process, which in turn may lead to negative work attitudes.

While research on metastereotypes, particularly age-based metastereotypes, is still scant (for notable exceptions see Bal et al., 2015; Finkelstein et al., 2013), findings suggest that workplace ageism would benefit from an articulated framing of negative age-based metastereotypes, stereotype threat, and their consequences regarding workers psychological well-being and their work attitudes alike (Finkelstein et al., 2015). For instance, experimental work showed that besides being positively related with prejudice, negative metastereotypes predicted intergroup anxiety (Finchilescu, 2010). Field research about ageing workforces also indicated that negative age-based metastereotypes were negatively related with occupational future time perspective and indirectly related with stronger retirement intentions (Bal et al., 2015). Interestingly, in the same study no statistically significant relationships were found between negative age stereotypes about older workers and older workers attitudes toward retirement. These findings reinforce the need for more research on age-based metastereotypes in organizational settings, in particular, in those with increasing age diversity. Given that the diversity of attributes like age contributes to separate the population of social units (e.g., organizations) in classes such as "old" and "young", age group categorizations are likely to be more salient, and thus age becomes more meaningful for individuals. In this vein, negative stereotypes about older workers held, for instance, by younger workers may become internalized by older workers, and thereby these workers are likely to adjust work attitudes and behaviors accordingly to that negative age-based metastereotypes (Bal et al., 2015).

In sum, metastereotypes are beliefs regarding stereotypes other social groups hold about one's ingroup which should be present to initiate the stereotype threat process (Finkelstein et al., 2015, 2013; Voyles et al., 2014). However, few attempts

have been made to investigate the relationship between those constructs, especially in field settings (Judd et al., 2005). Besides calling into question the quality of intergenerational dynamics, workplace negative age-based metastereotypes boost evaluation pressures on stereotyped individuals and, herewith, stigmatized workers sometimes fail to express their full potential (Shiu et al., 2015). Further research on the triggering role of metastereotypes on age-based stereotype threats in the workplace is, therefore, recommended. In addition, a better understanding of what workers believe other age groups think of their own age group would help managers increase the effectiveness of age management efforts. In this way, research would contribute to hinder stereotyping negative consequences, both regarding workers well-being and organizational outcomes (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Shiu et al., 2015).

As abovementioned, the stereotype threat scholarship has advanced several stereotype threat situational triggers like rigid organizational structures, cultural centeredness, and minority representation (Steele et al., 2002). For the purposes of this research, the next section will focus on those eliciting factors, with a particular emphasis on older workers representation.

2.3.3. Situational triggers of stereotype threat

The stereotype threat literature predicts that threat activation is contingent on several aspects of the organizational context (Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Steele et al., 2002). For instance, rigid organizational structures have been associated with higher stereotype threat vulnerability (Kray & Shirako, 2011). Rigid hierarchical structures tend to widen the gap between high status and low status individuals. In doing so, organizational members occupying positions that render low status and power may experience “a perpetual state of negativity” (Kray & Shirako, 2011, p. 179) as a result of the anxiety driven by an inflexible hierarchical configuration.

Rigidity, either at the organizational structure level or with regard to organizational norms and values seems to reinforce stereotype threat. Organizational norms like career timetables (Lawrence, 1988) might influence the likelihood of the stereotype threat experience and could contribute to explain the differentiated emergence of age stereotypes and discrimination in different industries. Career

timetables are schedules (e.g., promotions) that workers should reach at a certain age in accordance with occupational and organizational age norms. These age norms also specify what jobs are more or less appropriate for younger or for older workers or when is it expected older workers to retire to make room for their younger colleagues.

In addition, basic assumptions about social groups' value and contribution to organizational performance shape organizational members behavior toward their colleagues (Kulik, 2014b). Because these organizational beliefs about performance are shared by almost all employees and often rooted in "culturally centered" views, members of negatively stereotyped groups are under additional pressure in the workplace (Kray & Shirako, 2011). Organizations are culturally centered insofar as they identify once and for all those social categories prone to be successful, and consequently those who are not (Steele et al., 2002). Vulnerability to stereotype threat increases with implicit theories grounded on entity mindsets, in fixed capabilities, whereas incremental and more pliable views help threatened individuals to unveil their potential and to remain engaged with the stereotyped domain (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). Indeed, when social identity categories such as sex, age, or race underpin organizational criteria, stereotype threat activation in organizations becomes more likely. Kray and Shirako (2011) suggested that organizations that put emphasis on predictors more directly related with success (e.g., effort), rather than on social identities may reduce the contextual risk of exacerbating stereotypes effects. In other terms, fixed mindsets should be replaced by beliefs that reflect, in the clearest possible terms, the relationship between performance and individuals' characteristics. To this end, group members that do not share the ideal social identity advocated by the organizational culture are at risk of being marginalized from the organizational decision-making centers, and being denied development opportunities or upward progression. Overall, the more "culturally centered" a work setting proves to be, the greater is the threat likelihood for members of devaluated groups (Block et al., 2011; Steele et al., 2002).

Stereotype threat activation is also dependent on the extent to which the stereotype content seems related with the task domain (Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Steele et al., 2002). As such, stereotype relevance is often mentioned as one of the primary conditions for stereotype threat. In this way, it has been argued that the overall organizational demographic composition is one of the situational features that can

emphasize stereotype relevance (Block et al., 2011) thereby cuing stereotype threat, in particular regarding minority group members (Kalokerinos et al., 2014). Because minority individuals are salient social stimulus, the categorization process is heightened, thereby eliciting stereotypes commonly associated with individuals' group membership (Roberson et al., 2003).

2.3.3.1. Older workers representation

Steele and Aronson's (1995) initial findings suggested that stereotype threat undermined the intellectual performance of individuals belonging to negatively stereotyped groups: given the negative stereotype about African Americans verbal ability, making their group identity salient was sufficient to impair their academic performance. That being the case, it is likely that older workers vulnerability to stereotype threat increases in work contexts where their group membership is most salient (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

Group heterogeneity in the work environment may raise the likelihood of social identity threats, in particular regarding minority group members (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Steele et al., 2002). Minority representation at the organizational, unit, departmental, job or team level poses serious challenges to stigmatized minority organizational members because stigmatized minority individuals are pressured to overachieve in order to refute negative stereotypes about their ingroup (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003). Thus, when older workers perceive that their negatively stereotyped age group is an organizational minority, such underrepresentation might evoke social identity threat in the workplace (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007; Steele et al., 2002). The similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) provides a valuable explanation for the threat prompted by underrepresentation. This paradigm suggests that, in interpersonal contexts, individuals are attracted to, like and seek others who are similar to themselves (Byrne, 1971). Individuals prefer to affiliate with others with whom they share similar thoughts, attitudes, values, feelings and behaviors because likeness makes it easier to understand and predict the other's behavior. Moreover, shared beliefs provide, to some extent, the social validation of one's belief system. Conversely, individuals who think and behave in ways that do not

match by any means one's views are likely to be perceived as threats. As such, perceived dissimilarity might enhance ethnocentric views between social groups that are likely to be further amplified when stereotyped groups are underrepresented in the work context. Perceived stigma against the ingroup prompts emotional responses among stereotyped group members and, thus, feelings of threat become more salient. For this reason, organizations do not always instill workers with a sense of belonging and satisfaction (Becker & Tausch, 2014; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001).

In short, since low demographic representation of a stigmatized group is likely to be interpreted as an organizational endorsement of negative stereotypes about that group, such underrepresentation may boost pressures on stereotyped individuals, thus triggering stereotype threat (Roberson et al., 2003).

Yet, beyond eliciting stereotype threat (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003; Steele et al., 2002; von Hippel et al., 2011), older workers underrepresentation may impact workforce age dynamics in other ways. There are reasons to believe that older workers underrepresentation may also activate negative age-based metastereotyping (Finkelstein et al., 2015). As described earlier, one of the basic tenets of the age-based metastereotype activation model (Finkelstein et al., 2015) is that age-based metastereotypes become activated by individual and contextual factors. For the purposes of this research, the role played by the work context in the age-based metastereotype activation process seems particularly relevant. Consistent with Finkelstein et al. (2015), it is suggested that age-based metastereotypes are likely to be more salient in contexts in which age subgrouping is apparent. Therefore, besides being a stereotype threat trigger at work, minority representation might also impact the age-based metastereotyping process because underrepresentation makes age stereotypes more salient. Moreover, as work contexts are evaluative both on a day-to-day basis and on programmed performance assessments, metastereotype activation is likely to take place more frequently in these type of settings (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Additionally, age becomes an even more meaningful workplace characteristic when workers feel that their age group is a minority in the workplace age demographics (Shore, Cleveland, & Goldberg, 2003). For instance, older workers underrepresentation may prompt feelings that they are not valued members of the organization, thus activating negative metastereotypes which in turn increase the likelihood of stereotype threats. Furthermore,

as negative age-based metastereotypes are beliefs that refer to negative age stereotypes hold by other age groups about one's age group, they are likely to trigger concerns that target both age group reputation and older workers' self-image. Building on the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), it seems possible that the representation of older workers may be negatively related to group-reputation threat, but not to own-reputation threat. Given that underrepresentation cues stigmatized individuals that their group membership is a barrier to their development, concerns about the ingroup reputation and image are likely to be more salient and relevant than concerns about self-worth and own-reputation, thus offsetting them.

Alongside with the stereotype threat theory, findings from the organizational age diversity literature might be useful to understand the role played by older workers underrepresentation in eliciting social identity threats in the workplace (Kalokerinos et al., 2014). For a long time, age diversity potential upsides and downsides were not as thoroughly explored as those associated with gender and ethnicity diversity (Nelson, 2002). Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on organizational age diversity. Research has focused in particular on objective organizational age diversity effects. Nevertheless, to date there has been little agreement on the impact of organizational age diversity on team performance and identification (Ellwart, Bündgens, & Rack, 2013). Research framed on social identity theory, on self-categorization theory, and on the similarity-attraction paradigm has concluded for a negative impact, while studies conducted within the information/decision making perspective established positive outcomes (Lu, Chen, Huang, & Chien, 2015). Despite these mixed accounts in the organizational age diversity literature, Ellwart et al. (2013) draw the attention to an increased likelihood of negative effects of age diversity in organizations due to widespread negative stereotypes about older workers which may result in intergroup bias in the workplace. In this vein, researchers have suggested that the organizational distribution of employees may cue stereotype threat since stigmatized group members may experience that they are undervalued organizational members when their group is underrepresented in an organization (Bragger et al., 2014; Kalokerinos et al., 2014; McKay & Avery, 2006; Steele et al., 2002).

All in all, both the organizational age diversity and the stereotype threat literature suggest that the organizational age composition may contribute to exacerbate

age threats (Ellwart et al., 2013; Kalokerinos et al., 2014). In this context, stigmatized minority organizational members deal with serious challenges in the workplace (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011), and therefore more research is needed to obtain a good outlook of the effects from older workers representation in the workplace.

2.3.4. Stereotype threat boundary conditions

Stereotype threat research frames stereotyping beyond the individual level as it offers contextual and situational interpretations of the nomological network of societal stereotypes (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Shapiro, 2011; Steele et al., 2002). Given that “stereotype threat is best thought of as a predicament of a person in a situation” (Steele et al., 2002, p. 397), admittedly stereotype threat vulnerability and consequences may be influenced by individual differences and by contextual features. Besides stereotype threat individual and situational antecedents, research has considered several boundary conditions that shape individuals’ experience of stereotype threat. So far, however, a comprehensive view of stereotype threat boundary conditions in the workplace is still missing. The current study aims to fill this gap by examining the moderator role of individual level constructs like age diversity beliefs and age group identification, and organizational features like HRM practices in the stereotype threat nomological network.

2.3.4.1. The moderator role of age diversity beliefs

The research to date has tended to focus on objective organizational age diversity rather than on perceived age diversity. Objective organizational age diversity refers to indicators of diversity (e.g., employee files) that are based on visible data such as age (Ellwart et al., 2013), whereas perceived age diversity refers to individual subjective evaluations about age diversity in a given organization. Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in subjective variables such as perceptions, beliefs and feelings about diversity (Ellwart et al., 2013; Meyer, Shemla, & Schermuly, 2011; Ries, Diestel, Wegge, & Schmidt, 2010). Given that there is no direct correspondence

between objective diversity and subjective perceptions of diversity, Meyer et al. (2011) highlighted the need to assess beyond objective organizational age diversity. Therefore, so as to improve the understanding of the dynamics of age groups relationships, research designs should cover the assessment of perceived age diversity. In fact, several authors have noticed the importance of perceptions and cognitions about diversity for organizational performance and workers' well-being (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Homan et al., 2010; Shore et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012). For instance, age-related beliefs tend to be used for a long time as attitudinal and behavioral determinants when intergenerational contact is not frequent (DeArmond et al., 2006). In addition, the assessment of employees' perceptions about organizational diversity may bring to light potential discrepancies between espoused diversity management values and actual diversity management activities. Taken together, research findings suggest that perceived age diversity adds explanatory power to age-related issues in organizations (Ellwart et al., 2013; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Meyer et al., 2011).

Building on these findings, the current research aims to fill this gap and shed some more light on how stereotype threat is moderated by age diversity beliefs, an individual-level factor that theoretically alleviates stereotype threats (Steele et al., 2002). Diversity beliefs are cognitive in nature and refer to the degree to which diversity is understood as an advantage rather than a risk by the individual (Homan et al., 2010). Both individual factors such as openness to experience, and contextual factors such as diversity fault lines - hypothetical lines that split a group into subgroups based on the alignment of at least one demographic characteristic (Lau & Murnighan, 1998), influence diversity perceptions and beliefs. When individual variables gain strength, objective diversity and subjective diversity correspondence is diminished (Ellwart et al., 2013). An encouraging implication of the acknowledgment of diversity beliefs relies on their plasticity and potential for change. From a practical viewpoint, it is probably easier to change age perceptions and beliefs than the organization age structure (Hertel et al., 2013). This is particularly relevant because unlike other diversity categories such as gender, age diversity is generally beyond the company's control since it is, to a large extent, caused by ongoing demographic changes. Herewith, organizational age diversity implies the management of employees' diversity beliefs above and beyond the fit between employment practices (Harrison & Klein, 2007).

Furthermore, the increasing organizational age diversity (Pugh et al., 2008) has been associated with higher levels of perceived age discrimination in the workplace (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2011). In this scenario, it is critical to understand the role played by age diversity beliefs in organizational dynamics. Specifically, a first step in this endeavor could be to clarify whether age diversity beliefs foster intergenerational cohesion and, by doing so, hamper identity threats posed by social categorization, or whether age diversity beliefs turn stigmatized social identities more salient, thus reinforcing the harmful consequences arising from objective organizational age diversity. When team members value diversity, the team performance will most likely improve. On the contrary, if team diversity elicits self-categorization and sub-grouping, social identities become more salient and it is likely that negative effects on team performance will emerge. To date, empirical findings have shown that diversity beliefs act as moderators of the individual and organizational impacts of objective age diversity (Ellwart et al., 2013; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In this way it seems particularly important to understand how age diversity beliefs from members of negatively stereotyped age groups interact with negative age-based metastereotypes in predicting age threats in the workplace. From a managerial viewpoint, research on age diversity beliefs may help managers to fine tune age diversity training contents.

2.3.4.2. The moderator role of age group identification

Another individual characteristic that may aggravate or alleviate stereotype threats is the level of ingroup identification. As aforementioned, ingroup identification refers to the extent to which an individual perceives that he/she belongs to that group and that he/she identifies himself/herself with such membership (Barbier et al., 2013). Research has shown that ingroup identification is a boundary condition of the effects from social identity threats (Block et al., 2011; McCoy & Major, 2003). In a three-wave longitudinal study, Barbier et al. (2013) showed that the increase in perceived stigma against one's group predicts higher future exhaustion levels. Moreover, ingroup identification was found to moderate the relationship between perceived stigma and work engagement in such a way that high levels of identification among members of stigmatized groups were related to decreased work engagement (Barbier et al., 2013).

On the basis of these results, the authors claimed that perceived stigma and ingroup identification influence the workers' well-being and job strain, and that for that reason they could be included in occupational stress models such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model is an overarching model which includes numerous working conditions that affect the workers' well-being and stress. Properties of the work situation that request physical and psychological efforts such as work pressure are known as job demands, whereas those which provide social support, personal development or mitigate job demands such as, for example, team climate were called job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Importantly, job resources may satisfy the basic human need to belong, thus promoting workers' motivation and willingness to engage in their work. In fact, job resources were found to be negatively associated with work disengagement (Demerouti, Nachreiner, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2001). Given that perceived stigma and ingroup identification impact on the workers' engagement, the JD-R model would benefit from the integration of these two constructs. More specifically, perceived stigma together with ingroup identification could be added to the model as a social demand, in particular for individuals strongly identified with socially devalued groups (Barbier et al., 2013).

Regarding age group identification in particular, research findings indicate that individuals strongly identified with their age group perform worse in stereotype-threatening situations (Block et al., 2011; Kang & Chasteen, 2009). Yet, high levels of age group identification also buffered some of the negative affective consequences of stereotypes (Kang & Chasteen, 2009). It seems that at the same time that a higher degree of age group identification accentuates performance impairment of stereotyped age group members, it may also buffer detrimental stereotype threat effects on self-esteem. Moreover, threat reactions may be contingent on the age span, contributing to the idea of ageism being distinct from racism or sexism. Research examining whether the participants' level of identification with their age group was a good predictor of the responses they give to threats to their age group status has found different results for younger and older adults. Whereas strongly identified younger adults revealed intergroup bias following threat to their group status (in keeping with expectations of the social identity approach), older adults did not show it. Older adults dissociative age-group responses were also reported by Weiss and Lang (2012)

suggesting age group relations deserve further research, especially regarding older age groups. Along the same vein, Levy and Banaji (2002) also found evidence sustaining somewhat unexpected implicit outgroup favoritism in older individuals. It might be the case that having internalized negative stereotypes about their age group, older adults' ingroup identification plays a minor role than what the social identity approach predicted (Levy, 2009). In addition, these findings raise interesting questions for ageism research. It is admitted that it is the perception of age group identification, rather than the objective chronologically age-group membership, that seems to play the major role on the processes of stereotype threat and self-stereotyping.

Contradictory findings about group identification moderator effects may be due to the fact that research has been focusing on qualitatively different forms of threat (Shapiro, 2011). It is likely that age group identification effects vary according to the way stigmatized individuals perceive the threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). For instance, when age threats are perceived as targeting the ingroup reputation, age group identification is certainly expected to play a role, both as a trigger and as a moderator of the threat effects, whereas the influence from age group identification on shaping the effects of threats perceived to target individuals' self-worth is likely less important. In order to test this latter assumption, more investigation should be undertaken to examine whether age group identification moderates the own-reputation threat. Doing so, research would continue to enlighten the debate about multiple and independent forms of stereotype threat.

In sum, the assessment of age group identification has an important role to play in the ageing workforces' research agenda. From a social identity theory viewpoint (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), age group identification comprises an emotional component that conveys a certain level of self-esteem to individuals. Given that stereotyping research has called for more investigation on boundary conditions that grasp the emotional value of age group membership (Bal et al., 2015), and that stereotype threats may prompt different responses depending on the ingroup identification of its members, further research is needed to explore the moderator role of age group identification in the relationship between own-reputation threat, one of the forms of stereotype threat suggested by Shapiro and Neuberg (2007), and negative work attitudes like work disengagement and organizational disidentification.

2.3.4.3. The moderator role of perceived HRM practices

As pointed out above, individual differences are likely to be associated with vulnerability and reactions of different nature and magnitude to stereotype threat. By the same token, contextual features such as workplace interventions may also moderate the likelihood of stereotype threat (Finkelstein et al., 2015), mainly due to the signals these interventions send to stereotyped workers (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Casad & Bryant, 2016; Kulik, 2014b). Workplace interventions refer to activities that introduce change(s) in one or more elements of the work setting in order to increase organizational effectiveness (Zabel & Baltes, 2015). In light of increasing age diversity in organizations, workplace interventions may be a key moderator of older workers experience of stereotype threat (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

Building on Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser's (2011) argument that HRM practices are likely to counteract demographic cues that trigger stereotype threat, it is suggested that HRM practices moderate the relationship between age-based negative metastereotypes and distinct forms of age-based stereotype threat. More specifically, since interventions have the potential to reframe cognitions like negative age-based metastereotypes (Casad & Bryant, 2016), and negative age-based metastereotypes may be interpreted either as threats or challenges (Finkelstein et al., 2015), more investigation is required to understand whether workplace interventions lead to a threat or a challenge reaction. Similarly, the stereotype threat framework would also benefit from more scholarship on the effects of HRM practices (Kulik, 2014b).

With older workers' age-related needs and preferences in mind (Kooij et al., 2014), some organizations have started to design practices that target specifically older workers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015; Kooij et al., 2014). Although the "one best way" in age management is yet to be found (Walker, 2005), there is an array of HRM practices aimed at promoting the productivity and retention of older workers: flexible working options, work/life balance policies, specific training, mentoring/coaching, performance evaluation, recognition and respect, and working conditions redesign (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Herrbach, Mignonac, Vandenberghe, & Negrini, 2009; Kooij et al., 2010; Pinto, Ramos, & Nunes, 2014). Some HRM practices are more appropriate for some jobs and industries than others. For instance, it has been

argued that the manufacturing sector may not be able to offer flexible work patterns (Pinto et al., 2014). On the contrary, job design has been suggested as an effective practice to offset stereotype threat, especially in the context of physically demanding jobs (Kulik, 2014b). In addition, being offered training opportunities is highly valued by older workers as it provides them a sense of organizational support (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2013; Pinto et al., 2014). In this regard, more research on how organizations may implement effective training for older workers would provide useful insights for hampering age threats in the workplace (Herrbach et al., 2009; Kooij et al., 2010; Kulik, 2014b; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Also, several studies showed that recognition and respect is one of the general HRM practices older workers value the most (Pinto et al., 2014), and a pivotal strategy to keep older workers in the workforce (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Feeling useful and respected allows older workers to pursue a positive social identity (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015), thereby counteracting age-based stereotype threats.

Three moderating roles in particular (job design, training, and recognition and respect) in the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats seem to deserve further research. Whereas the first two practices target specifically older workers (age-awareness practices), recognition and respect is considered a general HRM practice targeted to every worker.

The impact of HRM practices on older workers effectiveness, retention, and well-being has been investigated in the context of the social exchange theory among other theoretical frameworks. Studies building on social exchange theory (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009) argue that older workers tend to reciprocate to organizational efforts by adopting desirable work beliefs and behaviors and avoiding counterproductive behaviors (Kooij et al., 2010). This social exchange process refers to “actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 890). According to this framework, the provision of age-awareness HRM practices may mitigate the effects of negative age-based metastereotypes by raising stereotype targets engagement to refute the negative metabelief (Finkelstein et al., 2015). In this way, these practices have a symbolic value as they inform the workers about the organization’s plans toward older workers and they also portray organization values that

respect the older workers' social identity. Life-span theories such as the selection, optimization and compensation theory (Baltes et al., 1999), and the socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen et al., 1999) were the underlying conceptual frameworks in recent efforts to map research on workplace interventions' effectiveness (Zabel & Baltes, 2015) and to propose HR bundles for ageing workers (Kooij et al., 2014). While the former theory argues that the utility and effectiveness of HRM practices changes with age (Kooij et al., 2010), the latter focuses on the older workers need to feel socially interconnected (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015), which may be difficult in a context of deeply engrained negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats.

While each of these frameworks may offer valuable insights on the role played by age-awareness and general HRM practices in the relationships between older workers beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, this research contends that social identity theory is the most appropriate framework to explore the role of HRM practices. Building on social identity theory tenets and in recent research on the relationship between the provision of HRM practices and the retirement decision (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2013, 2015), it is argued that age-awareness HRM practices such as job design and training are likely to reinforce age-based stereotype threats among a disadvantaged group like older workers. Although taking the needs of older workers into account, hence reflecting a contingency perspective of HRM, these age-awareness HRM practices may not foster identity safety among stereotyped workers. Specific HRM practices for older workers have the potential to cue age as a stigmatizable characteristic, which in turn may drive heightened levels of threat among older workers. Furthermore, as the aim of the HRM practices may backlash, the positive attitudes and behaviors expected by social exchange theory, namely by the reciprocity norm, may be at risk. In fact, practices that segment the workforce on the basis of age groups may bring about perceptions of special treatment, inequality, and even resistance to those practices (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015). Thus, instead of facilitating workplace success, these practices increase the age threat at least in two ways. On the one hand, these practices are likely to foster older workers' endorsement of negative stereotypes about their own age group; on the other, negative age stereotypes held by outgroup members are expected to be reinforced, as special treatment practices may be interpreted by outgroup members as an organizational recognition of older workers

ineffectiveness. As a result of this increase in negative stereotyping by outgroup members, negative age-based metastereotypes may become more salient and frequently activated.

Moreover, HRM practices for older workers may prompt feelings of exclusion on non-targets. All in all, the effects from age-awareness HRM practices may sometimes rebound, yielding increased salience of negative stereotypes and vulnerability to age threats (Streets & Major, 2014). By making the age group more salient, and activating negative stereotypes about older workers, both in the targets' and non-targets' eyes, HRM practices for older workers may have unintended negative effects. Older workers may interpret the adoption of such practices targeting their age group as a formal recognition that older workers are less valuable members of the workforce, which in turn may cause worry, concern and apprehension, that is, increased levels of own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat. By the same token, it is anticipated that recognition and respect practices may mitigate age-based stereotype threats by providing value and inclusion for stereotyped individuals, and at the same time, due respect (Guillaume et al., 2013). Unlike job design or training, recognition and respect practices communicate to all organizational members the value and usefulness of older workers allowing them to construct a positive social identity (Kulik, 2014b).

Overall, susceptibility to stereotype threats may be influenced by perceived HRM practices. To this extent, the examination of the roles played by different types of work interventions would be a valuable contribution to stereotype threat research, and to managers willing to hamper social identity threats in the workplace.

2.3.5. Stereotype threat psychological outcomes

Since its original formulation, stereotype threat theory suggested defensive individual responses to the stereotype threat experience such as disengagement and disidentification (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele et al., 2002).

2.3.5.1. Work disengagement

The literature on the psychological effects of stereotype threat in the workplace includes short and long-term adjustments. Disengagement is one of the most frequently mentioned quick-defense responses to deal with broadly held negative stereotypes (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Steele, 1997; Steele et al., 2002).

Avoiding the threatened domain is not always possible, particularly in socially valued contexts such as the workplace. Hence, individuals may attempt to shield themselves from negative age stereotypes damaging consequences by reducing the links between the self and stereotypical evaluations of one's skills and performance. To put it simply, by disengaging from work (Crocker et al., 1998; Steele et al., 2002). Work disengagement is an individual withdrawal coping mechanism whereby workers decouple their full selves from the role, object, and content of their work in order to avoid the depletion of personally valued resources (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010).

The first discussions and analyses of work disengagement emerged with Kahn's (1990) ethnographic study about personal engagement and disengagement at work. Kahn's (1990) study paved the way for disengagement research as the interplay between workers and their work context is not always balanced and thus, in certain circumstances, workers are likely to distance themselves from the work domain. When workers perceive an imbalance between invested resources and personal needs fulfillment or when environmental stressors are perceived, workers tend to put into place individual psychological withdrawal strategies in order to reestablish the desired equilibrium, thereby conserving resources. In this way, besides impairing performance, stereotype threat may increase anxiety levels, raise identity and self-esteem concerns, and elicit decreased engagement at work. For instance, research findings showed that older workers respond to perceived age discrimination by reducing their affective organizational commitment (Rabl & Triana, 2013). In the same vein, recent research evinced that workplace threats like perceived ageism are negatively associated with workers' engagement, even among those not targeted by such bias (James, Mckechnie, Swanberg, & Besen, 2013). Other stressors like ageist communication in the workplace

were also found to be predictors of older nurses' psychological disengagement at work, which in turn intensified retirement intentions (Lagacé, Tougas, Laplante, & Neveu, 2010). Older workers use this type of resource conservation strategies to deal with workplace stressors such as age-based stereotype suggesting that work disengagement may also emerge under those circumstances. And given that situational threats are likely to trigger decreased engagement (Barbier et al., 2013; Casad & Bryant, 2016; James et al., 2013; Steele & Aronson, 1995), workers reciprocity with the organization is at stake whenever their perceptions point to unfair or biased treatment by the organization (Downey, van der Werff, Thomas, & Plaut, 2015). Moreover, as employees disengage from work, their work efforts and drive are likely to be confined to explicitly required activities. Furthermore, as more and more older workers undergo a psychological disconnection from work, a growing number of organizations are subject to corporate memory loss in the long-run. In a nutshell, the disengagement process entails drawbacks, both for stereotyped people and for their organizations.

Another major contribution of Kahn's (1990) seminal work was the description of psychological conditions that theoretically induce work engagement. Important to the current research are the psychological conditions of meaningfulness and safety. Meaningfulness refers to the "feeling that one is receiving a return on investments of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy" (Kahn, 1990, p. 704). Meaningful workplaces make workers feel worthwhile, useful, and appreciated. For example, supervisor and co-worker support are believed to be meaningful factors in the workplace, since rewarding interactions allow workers to reinforce their sense of belonging and inclusion (Downey et al., 2015). Moreover, respectful interactions in the workplace have another positive effect. Rewarding interactions are associated with a more meaningful work experience, and they foster a sense of psychological safety at work whereby the expression of one's true self is made possible. Conversely, when workers experience lack of meaning in their workplace due to, for example, perceived age threats, they might disengage from work. Since job withdrawal behaviors like absenteeism may arise on the basis of psychological withdrawal responses such as work disengagement, it is vital to increase our understanding of the disengagement process (Block et al., 2011; George, 2011; Walton et al., 2015). Even though the likelihood of confirming the negative stereotype and boosting its salience decreases with work

disengagement, at the same time, disengagement inhibits the complete and full statement of one's working skills. In fact, work disengagement has been associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Riketta, 2008), decreased levels of motivation (Roberson & Kulik, 2007), and lack of job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Taken together, these findings may suggest that organizational performance itself may be impaired by work disengagement (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

By means of disengagement with the task domain, stereotyped individuals seek to maintain a sense of control over their self-esteem by breaking the connections between one's performance and negative stereotypes. Thus, this short-term defensive response to stereotype threat situations is likely to emerge as one of the coping strategies older workers use to deal with the threat posed by broadly held negative age beliefs. In this context, work disengagement will most certainly have an impact on individual and organizational outcomes and, as such, there is the need for more research to understand the conditions in which it evolves.

2.3.5.2. Organizational disidentification

Stereotype threat consequences may go beyond disengagement and lead to long-term or even everlasting consequences that shape the identity development of stigmatized group members (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Kray & Shirako, 2011; Steele et al., 2002). Researchers claimed that persistent exposure to stereotype threat may lead to chronic psychological adaptations such as disidentification (Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Steele et al., 2002). When the threat is persistent, "it can pressure disidentification, a reconceptualization of the self and of one's values so as to remove the domain as a self-identity, as a basis of self-evaluation" (Steele, 1997, p. 614). More than a mismatch with the organization, disidentification entails an active separation from the organization (Ashforth, Joshi, Anand, & O'Leary-Kelly, 2013). One way of coping with stereotype threat is thus reducing or even removing the degree to which one's identity is tied to the domain where the stereotype is activated. If that is the case, then it is possible that older workers, having lived in an ageist society are coping with negative age beliefs in the workplace through organizational disidentification.

The psychological detachment and distance from the organization that characterize organizational disidentification arise mainly because employees self-evaluate as being different from or in moral conflict with the organization's values or ideologies (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). According to the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), an important motive for individuals to join groups is to obtain a positive social identity, that is to define and evaluate who they are, how to behave and predict how they will be treated by others, based upon the consideration that the group membership reduces subjective uncertainty in intergroup relationships and raises self-esteem. In theoretical terms (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), disidentification with the organization occurs primarily because organizational membership represents a negative aspect of the self. As aforementioned, individuals are motivated to relate and interact with others insofar as it allows them to have a sense of belonging with a larger and meaningful entity (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). However, organizations sometimes fail to instil a sense of belonging in their members because the organizational climate is not perceived as inclusive, and, as a result, stereotyped group members feelings of threat become more salient (Becker & Tausch, 2014). Once organizational membership is not seen in a positive light, workers may engage in protective coping mechanisms that psychologically distance themselves from the organization. As Ashforth and Johnson (2001, p. 31) put it "Before individuals can act in a given organizational context, they need to situate themselves and others - to define the respective social identities of the players". Workplace identification is therefore an interplay process between the individual and all the sources of social identification available. Workers will define themselves in terms of social memberships and the degree of identification/disidentification with the organization will shape workers beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Hence, provided that organizational boundaries are impermeable (e.g., the worker cannot leave the organization due to financial constraints) and that identity threats are salient, stigmatized workers are likely to experience organizational disidentification and counterproductive work behaviours such as voicing strong negative views of the organization. For this reason, organizations should be striving to preclude negative age beliefs in the workplace since it is likely that they elicit organizational disidentification.

Furthermore, other negative implications have been associated with organizational disidentification. Scholars reported that enduring exposure to age threats in the work setting leads to undesirable consequences such as heightened retirement intentions (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008), and that the individual costs of long-lasting social identity threats might even go beyond the workplace context, spilling over to personal domains with negative organizational consequences (Kang & Inzlicht, 2014). Organizational disidentification has also been negatively associated with organizational reputation, and positively with psychological contract breach and cynicism (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Importantly, scholars claimed that despite having to sustain the negativity derived from disidentification, even disidentified individuals may remain in the organization for long periods of time, thereby putting at risk workers well-being and organizations' long-term interests (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Given that job withdrawal responses (e.g., lateness, absenteeism, turnover) may arise as a consequence of psychological withdrawal coping mechanisms, more research on organizational disidentification antecedents needs to be undertaken (Walton et al., 2015). In this regard, it seems reasonable to posit that just as age-based stereotype threats are likely to activate organizational disidentification, negative age-based metastereotypes will also influence organizational disidentification (Casad & Bryant, 2016). Recent research has shown that negative age-based metastereotypes about older workers are directly associated with fewer perceived opportunities at work and indirectly with stronger retirement intentions (Bal et al., 2015). Along the same vein, it is contended that besides triggering feelings of threat among stereotyped group members, negative age-based metastereotypes are likely to distance older workers from the organization when the organizational climate is not perceived as age-inclusive.

In sum, organizational disidentification is an important phenomenon both for scholars and managers that strive to include identity-based approaches in their age diversity management strategy, particularly in ageist work settings. However, far too limited attention has been paid to the study of disidentification in the workplace (Walton et al., 2015). Hence, there is a need for further research in this area by examining the relationship between the threats derived from negative age beliefs of older workers and organizational disidentification.

CHAPTER 3 - THEORETICAL MODEL, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature review conducted in the previous chapter, this study aims to fill some of the identified gaps and contribute to a better understanding of the older workers experience of age-based stereotype threat in the workplace. This research claims that the stereotype threat framework (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and, in particular, the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) are relevant tools to understand how older workers cope with negative stereotypes about their age group in the workplace.

From a stereotype threat framework perspective, the purposes of this research are threefold:

- 1) to examine the relationship between older workers representation, negative age-based metastereotypes, and age-based stereotype threats (own-reputation and group-reputation). In addition, to analyze whether age diversity beliefs and perceived HRM practices (job design, training, and recognition and respect) moderate the older workers vulnerability to those age-based stereotype threats;
- 2) to examine the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes, age-based stereotype threats and negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification). In addition, to analyze the moderating role played by age group identification in the relationship between own-reputation threat and the abovementioned negative work attitudes;
- 3) to examine the usefulness of the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) and the age metastereotype activation model (Finkelstein et al., 2015) for a better understanding of the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers.

This chapter presents the theoretical model that guided the research and it also outlines the hypotheses formulated in accordance with the theoretical model. The research design, the methodological procedures, and the measures adopted in the current study are described in the final sections of the chapter.

3.1. Theoretical model

Building on the state of the art of the extant body of literature on stereotype threat described in Chapter 2, three research gaps stand out.

A first gap was detected in the psychological outcomes of stereotype threat which have received much less research attention than, for instance, performance effects. Moreover, the mainstream stereotype threat research has mainly examined performance decrements in the lab context. However, the ageing of the workforce, together with the unsustainability of the early retirement schemes and the older workers' persistent problems in returning to the labor market, put work disengagement and organizational disidentification of older workers under the spotlight both for scholars and practitioners. Hence, understanding the disengagement and disidentification processes is particularly important, as it is known that psychological withdrawal responses may lead to job withdrawal behaviors. Although some field-based studies have been conducted in the workplace (e.g., von Hippel et al., 2013), more research is needed to examine whether stereotype threats' psychological outcomes such as disengagement and disidentification can be observed outside laboratorial settings. As the manufacturing sector appears to have been largely ignored by ageism research, this research attempts to shed light on the age-based stereotype threat experiences of older workers in this sector (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

By extension, more scholarship on age-based stereotype threat triggers and moderators in the workplace is also warranted. With this, stereotype threat research may contribute to raise the managers' awareness of the potentially harmful effects of negative workplace age stereotypes about older workers. Additionally, the examination of stereotype threat boundary conditions has the merit of integrating distinct bodies of literature. For instance, the assessment of the interaction effects between organizational age diversity beliefs, metastereotypes, and distinct forms of stereotype threat contributes to reinforce the links between age diversity literature and stereotype threat literature, while at the same time it contributes to highlight the importance of a multidimensional analysis on stereotype threat. Similarly, the examination of the role played by HRM practices in the older workers experience of stereotype threats (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015), integrates insights from the social identity approach, the stereotype threat

framework, and the HRM literature, thus broadening ageism research scope (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

A second gap concerns the limited articulation and integration of the metastereotyping literature and the stereotype threat literature. It was only recently that scholars suggested the integration of negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threat on a nomological network of age-based threat in the workplace (Finkelstein et al., 2015). This research aims to fill this gap in several ways. It is contended that the coping mechanisms older workers may have been using to deal with negative stereotypes are likely to be influenced not only by the concern of being stigmatized, but also by the beliefs embedded in negative age-based metastereotypes held by older workers. Therefore, metastereotypes should be seen as stereotype threat first-order triggers. It is admitted that older workers' beliefs concerning stereotypical beliefs that other age groups hold about older workers are likely to impact directly and positively on work disengagement and organizational disidentification. Furthermore, an indirect effect of negative age-based metastereotypes on work disengagement and organizational disidentification through age-based stereotype threat is anticipated. The worry, concern and anxiety prompted by confirming a negative stereotype about older workers are likely to mediate the relationship between negative age metabeliefs and these two work attitudes. In addition, by examining the association between older workers representation and stereotype threats, this investigation contributes to fill the research gap on the relationship between age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats. In this regard, this research analyzes whether the relationship between older workers representation and distinct forms of stereotype threat is mediated by negative age-based metastereotypes. In sum, it is contended that even though metastereotypes and stereotype threats are distinct constructs, their integration on a single analytical framework may provide a better understanding of age dynamics in the workplace. On a practical gist, by extending stereotype threat and age-metastereotype research to organizational settings, in particular to the manufacturing sector, this study seeks to raise the managers' awareness of the potentially detrimental effects of negative age bias in the workplace (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

A third gap is related to the fact that most researchers do not take into account distinct forms of stereotype threat in their work, leaving aside a promising research

approach (Shapiro et al., 2013). Most studies on stereotype threat conceptualize stereotype threat as unidimensional and representing a concern for the stigmatized group (Shapiro et al., 2013). One of the limitations of unidimensional conceptualizations of stereotype threat is that they do not acknowledge the implications of pointing to different targets in their conceptualizations. Against this background, it is claimed that the stereotype threat research agenda could benefit from more inquiry on some of the threats suggested by Shapiro and Neuberg (2007). For the purposes of this investigation, research efforts focused on own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat, two core stereotype threats with distinct targets contained within the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). This research contributes to the ongoing debate about stereotype threat dimensionality (Xavier et al., 2014), and does so in various ways. In this line, throughout the empirical work, emphasis is placed on age-based stereotype threats antecedents (older workers representation and negative age-based metastereotypes), moderators (e.g., perceived HRM practices), and psychological outcomes (e.g., organizational disidentification). Moreover, the mediation role played by age-based stereotype threats in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and psychological outcomes is also examined.

Overall, research on age-based stereotype threat in the workplace is still in its early stages. In order to enlighten this scholarship, this thesis brings together the stereotype threat framework, with particular focus on the multi-threat framework, and the literature on metastereotyping to investigate the relationships between the variables outlined in Table 1. As aforementioned, other research bodies such as the organizational age diversity and HRM literature also help to inform the theoretical model and to interpret research findings.

As indicated in the Introduction, this research aims to fill the three different gaps identified in the literature, for which a two-step study about the stereotype threat experience of older workers holding blue-collar jobs in the Portuguese manufacturing sector was conducted. Having presented the theoretical framework which guides this research, it is necessary for clarity purposes to briefly describe the specific aims of each step. In the first step, the research addresses the relationship between the older workers representation, and both own-reputation and group-reputation. Negative age-based

metastereotypes are suggested to mediate this relationship, and the moderator role of age diversity beliefs regarding stereotype threat vulnerability is investigated.

Table 1. *Research model main variables*

Age-based Stereotype Threat			
Eliciting Factor	Core Threat	Moderator	Outcome
Older Workers Representation	Own-reputation Threat	Age Diversity Beliefs	Work Disengagement
Negative Age-based Metastereotypes	Group-reputation Threat	Age Group Identification	Organizational Disidentification
		Job Design	
		Training	
		Recognition and Respect	

Note. Negative Age-based Metastereotypes and Age-based Stereotype Threats were used as the mediation variables in the research model.

In the second step, the study focuses on the mediation role played by own-reputation threat in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes. In addition, age group identification is included as a moderator of own-reputation attitudinal outcomes, and the mediation model is tested for invariance between older workers age groups. In this second step, the research further explores the relationship between own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat and organizational disidentification. Furthermore, a multiple mediation model with negative age-based metastereotypes as the mediator is tested. Finally, perceived HRM practices effectiveness in discouraging age-based stereotype threats is also analyzed.

Based on the abovementioned arguments and frameworks, a theoretical model was developed to guide the research (Figure 1).

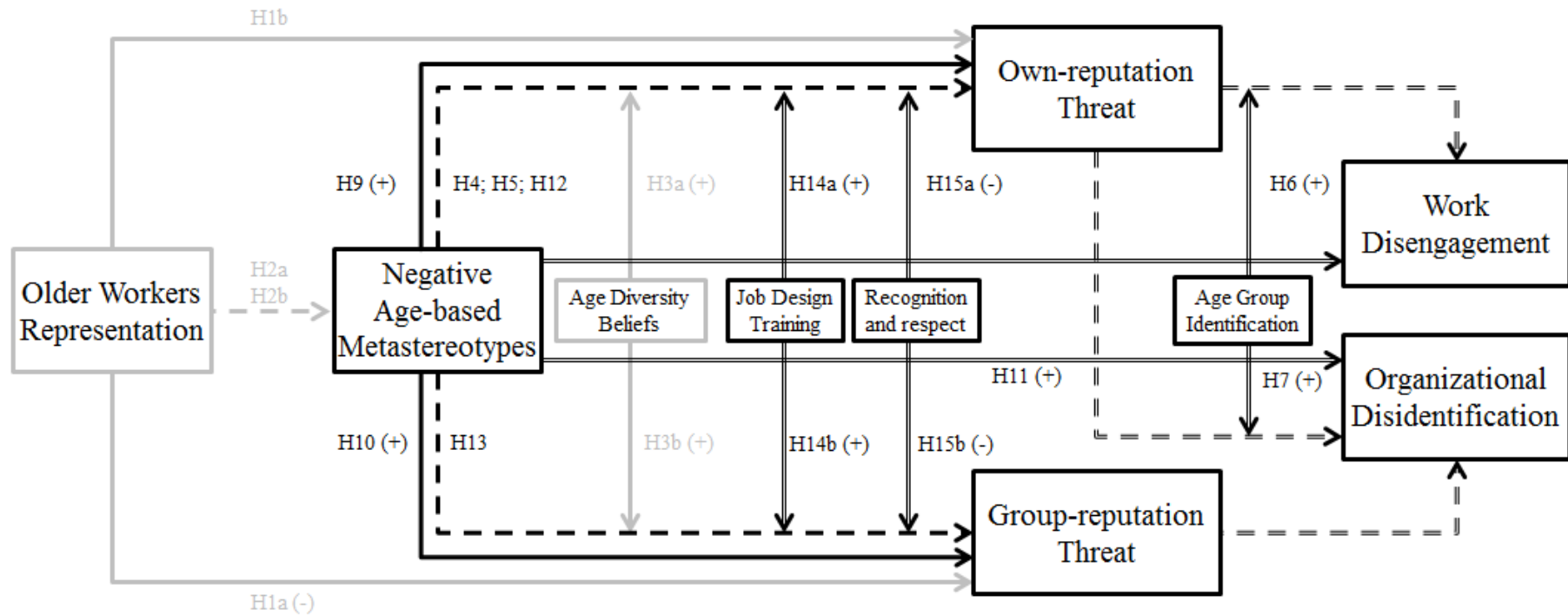


Figure 1. Theoretical model

Note. Grey paths (—) refer to the first step of the study, and double black line paths (==) to the second. Single black line paths (—) are examined in both steps of the study. Dashed paths (- - -) indicate mediation hypotheses.

3.2. Research hypotheses

On the basis of the theoretical model, twenty hypotheses were formulated. Hypotheses from 1a to 3b are tested in the first step, and hypotheses 4 onwards are tested in the second step of the study.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b build on the target of stereotype threat dimension included in the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) to contend that the representation of older workers is negatively related to group-reputation threat, but not with own-reputation threat. It is assumed that underrepresentation cues stigmatized individuals that their group membership is a barrier to their development. Thus, concerns about the ingroup reputation and image are likely to be more salient and relevant in these workplaces, while concerns about self-worth and own-reputation are not.

The rationale for hypotheses 2a and 2b rests on the explanations hereafter. Age-based metastereotypes are likely to be more salient in contexts in which age subgrouping is apparent (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Therefore, besides being a stereotype threat trigger at work, minority representation might also have an impact on the age-based metastereotyping process because underrepresentation makes age stereotypes more salient. Moreover, as work contexts are evaluative both on a day-to-day basis and on programmed performance assessments, metastereotype activation is likely to take place more frequently in these type of settings (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Additionally, age becomes an even more meaningful workplace characteristic when workers feel that their age group is a minority in the workplace age demographics. For instance, older workers underrepresentation may prompt feelings that they are not valued members of the organization, thus activating negative metastereotypes which in turn increase the likelihood of stereotype threats. In addition, as negative age-based metastereotypes are beliefs that refer to negative age stereotypes hold by other age groups about one's age group, they are likely to trigger concerns that target both age group reputation and older workers' self-image. In the first step, the study also seeks to further examine the moderation effect of age diversity beliefs on the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and two distinct forms of stereotype threat: group-reputation threat, and own-reputation threat. Given that diversity beliefs act as moderators of the

individual and organizational impacts of objective age diversity (Ellwart et al., 2013; van Knippenberg et al., 2004), it is hypothesized in hypotheses 3a and 3b that beliefs about age diversity influence the likelihood of age identity threats in the workplace. Therefore, the first study tests the following hypotheses:

H1a: Older workers representation is negatively related to group-reputation threat.

H1b: Older workers representation is not related to own-reputation threat.

H2a: Negative age-based metastereotypes mediate the relationship between older workers representation and own-reputation threat.

H2b: Negative age-based metastereotypes mediate the relationship between older workers representation and group-reputation threat.

H3a: Age diversity beliefs moderate the strength of the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat.

H3b: Age diversity beliefs moderate the strength of the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and group-reputation threat.

In the second step, the study contends that the coping mechanisms older workers may have been using to deal with negative stereotypes are likely to be influenced not only by the concern of being stigmatized, but also by age-based stereotype threat first-order triggers, that is to say, the beliefs embedded in older workers' negative age-based metastereotypes. It is suggested that older workers' beliefs concerning stereotypical beliefs that other age groups hold about older workers themselves are likely to impact directly and positively on work disengagement and organizational disidentification. Furthermore, an indirect effect of negative age-based metastereotypes on work disengagement and organizational disidentification through own-reputation threat is anticipated. The worry, concern and anxiety prompted by confirming a negative stereotype about older workers and targeted to the self-image is likely to mediate the relationship between negative age metabeliefs and these two work attitudes. Hence, hypotheses 4 and 5 propose own-reputation threat as a mediator of the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes.

H4: Own-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and work disengagement.

H5: Own-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification.

Given that a stronger age group identification accentuates performance impairment of stereotyped age group members (Block et al., 2011) and that stereotype threat vulnerability may be amplified when individuals identify strongly with the stereotyped group (Steele et al., 2002), this study aims to extend the age-based stereotype threat nomological network by proposing that age group identification exacerbates own-reputation threat psychological outcomes (hypotheses 6 and 7).

H6: Age group identification moderates the relationship between own-reputation threat and work disengagement, such that the path is stronger when age group identification is higher rather than lower.

H7: Age group identification moderates the relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification, such that the path is stronger when age group identification is higher rather than lower.

According to some researchers, stereotype threat may be experienced differently by different stigmatized groups (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). Unlike groups negatively stereotyped based on gender, race, or ethnicity, age emerges as a stigmatizing characteristic; age is not a dimension of stigma until a certain point in one's life cycle (Shapiro, 2011). In fact, age research has identified cognitive buffers specifically used by older individuals to cope with age stigma such as the "imaginary line" (Fula et al., 2012) or dissociative age-group responses (Cary et al., 2013; Weiss & Lang, 2012). Older individuals' use of these psychological resources suggests ageism scholarship would benefit from research that goes beyond common assumptions about intergroup relationships. Overall, and although research has advanced specific coping strategies older adults use to deal with stigma, subgroup differences in this regard have not been explicitly addressed. In addition, although a threshold for older workers was defined from the outset of the research, age group boundaries are flexible and subjective dividing lines (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). In this way, it is important to examine if the own-reputation threat is experienced equivalently across older workers of different ages. Against this background, this study builds on the participants' belief about their

co-workers view of the age one becomes older at work to posit that the hypothesized mediated relationships are invariant across older workers age groups (hypothesis 8).

H8: The mediation model is invariant across older workers age groups.

The second step of the study also builds on a multiple mediation model to examine the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes, own-reputation threat, group-reputation threat, and organizational disidentification. In line with Shapiro and Neuberg (2007), this study contends that given that distinct forms of threat share common eliciting conditions, they may co-occur. Against a background of widespread negative age stereotypes about older workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), it has been argued that metastereotypes are among those common stereotype threat eliciting conditions (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Voyles et al., 2014). Hence, hypotheses 9 and 10 assume a positive relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat, respectively.

H9: Negative age-based metastereotypes are positively related to own-reputation threat.

H10: Negative age-based metastereotypes are positively related to group-reputation threat.

Moreover, it seems reasonable to posit that just as age-based stereotype threats are likely to activate organizational disidentification, negative age-based metastereotypes will also influence organizational disidentification (Casad & Bryant, 2016). Besides triggering feelings of threat among stereotyped group members, negative age-based metastereotypes are likely to distance older workers from the organization to the extent that the organizational climate is not perceived as age-inclusive, thus increasing organizational disidentification (hypothesis 11).

H11: Negative age-based metastereotypes are positively related to organizational disidentification.

Multiple mediation analysis with mediators operating in parallel (own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat) tested the co-occurrence of core threats in the

relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification (hypotheses 12 and 13).

H12: Own-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification.

H13: Group-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification.

Following recent calls to further investigate the effects of HRM practices on workplace outcomes (Avery & McKay, 2010), the study contends that age-awareness HRM practices such as job design and training exacerbate the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats. Conversely, general HRM practices like recognition and respect are likely to lessen those relationships. In this vein, a set of hypotheses was formulated (hypotheses 14a to 15b).

H14a: Job design and training moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat, so that the paths are stronger when the perceived levels of the moderator variables are higher.

H14b: Job design and training moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and group-reputation threat, so that the paths are stronger when the perceived levels of the moderator variables are higher.

H15a: Recognition and respect moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat, so that the paths are weaker when the perception of recognition and respect is higher.

H15b: Recognition and respect moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and group-reputation threat, so that the paths are weaker when the perception of recognition and respect is higher.

Following the research model and hypotheses presented above, the next three sections describe and justify the research design and methodology adopted in order to test the abovementioned hypotheses.

3.3. Research design

This research followed a quantitative approach to analyze the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers of the manufacturing sector in Portugal. Based on a cross-sectional design, data were collected using self-reports from blue-collar older workers.

Research was developed in two stages: in the first stage, pilot testing was conducted in order to fine tune the questionnaire to be used. Given that self-reported measures could inflate relationships (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), second stage data collection was gathered in three waves. To circumvent that very same common source bias, the measure older workers representation was computed from employee files provided by HR managers.

In the pilot study (from July to November 2014), 40 participants from five manufacturing companies were asked to report any queries, comments, and suggestions about the pilot questionnaire. In order to increase the effectiveness of the procedure, three different sources were included in pilot testing: HR managers, younger workers (under 36 years old), and older workers (over 49 years old). Pilot questionnaire items were selected from suitable and reliable scales, and then submitted to a translation/back-translation procedure by a translation expert (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973). The sole exception was the negative age-based metastereotypes scale. This scale was developed following Hinkin's (1998) guidelines. In this way, the three items included in the pilot questionnaire were selected and developed from previous studies on workplace age stereotypes about older workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), from interviews with three expert scholars, and from consultations with HR managers and workers.

The final questionnaire consisted of two parts, one regarding sociodemographic characteristics and the other regarding the constructs under study (Appendices 1, 2, and 3). On the cover page, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured anonymity. Following initial contacts with top managers and HR managers assuring organizations' anonymity, e-mails and memos were sent inviting older workers to answer the questionnaire. Both online and paper versions of the questionnaire were made available since some older workers might not have internet access.

As aforementioned, second stage data were collected in three-waves. The first wave took place between January and May 2015, and the second and third waves occurred between March and June 2016. Data regarding the first step of the study were collected on the a single point in time (first wave), whereas in the second step of the study, data collection was separated in time with predictors and criterion constructs being gathered on the second and third waves respectively (see Table 2). Overall, 74% of the older workers invited to participate returned the self-report questionnaires, which left us with data for 990 participants on which analysis could be conducted. This response rate is well above the 53% average response rate found by Baruch and Holtom (2008) in organizational research based on data collected from individuals.

Table 2. *Research design*

Stage	Aim	Waves	Analytical Model	Hypotheses Testing
1 st	Pilot Testing	-	-	-
2 nd	Data Collection	1 st	Moderated mediation (single mediator)	Bootstrapped mediation and moderation
		2 nd and 3 rd	Moderated mediation (single mediator)	Bootstrapped mediation (SEM)
		2 nd and 3 rd	Moderated mediation (two mediators)	Bootstrapped moderation
		2 nd and 3 rd	Moderated mediation (two mediators)	Bootstrapped mediation and moderation

Note. SEM (Structural Equation Modeling).

The target population is made of older workers of the manufacturing sector. Ageism research in this sector is not as developed as in other sectors such as finance, insurance, retail, or information technology (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Still, because this sector is physically demanding, it follows that older workers vulnerability to stereotype threat may be heightened in these organizational settings. Moreover, the manufacturing sector has an important role in the Portuguese economy. It accounts, for

instance, for 16.4% of total employment (Ministério da Economia, 2016). For these reasons, the manufacturing sector was the selected sector to investigate further age threats in the workplace.

Given that the number of potential participants is limited to a specific segment of the workforce, thus raising additional sampling difficulties, participants were selected from organizations with which the researcher had privileged contacts. Hence, this research relies on a convenience sample (Edwards, 2008) comprised by workers from manufacturing companies.

Regarding data analyses, IBM SPSS Statistics 22 and AMOS 23 were used. Data analyses began with confirmatory factor analysis in order to confirm the factorial structure of the scales. Hypotheses were then tested using the Preacher and Hayes macro PROCESS v2.15 for SPSS (Hayes, 2013), with and without control variables where applicable and justified. Additionally, hypotheses 4, 5, and 8 were tested through structural equation modeling. Further information regarding procedures, participants, and measures included in each study is presented in the following sections.

3.4. Participants and procedures

The target population of the first wave of data collection is made of blue-collar older workers of the manufacturing sector in Portugal. The final sample was comprised of 567 participants aged 50-to-68 (360 males, 202 females, 5 unknown) working in 15 manufacturing companies. About 80% of the participants worked in large companies (more than 249 workers). The average age of participants was 54.36 years old ($SD = 3.35$) and the average tenure in the organization was 24.08 years ($SD = 10.157$). Most respondents were married (82%) and for 71% of them, basic education was the highest completed education level. Out of the 727 surveys distributed, 567 were returned, amounting to a response rate of 78 percent.

Following a cross-sectional design, hypotheses were tested with bootstrapped mediation and moderation analyses.

In the second step of the study, a moderated mediation model with a single mediator was tested with 423 participants aged 50-to-65 (282 males, 141 females) working in nine manufacturing companies operating in Portugal. 70% of the

participants work in large companies. Most respondents were married (81%) and for 69% of them basic education was the highest completed education level. The average age of participants was 53.96 years old ($SD = 3.13$), the average tenure in the organization was 24.42 years ($SD = 10.51$), and the average seniority on the job was 19.49 years ($SD = 11.46$). As described in the preceding section, data was collected in two waves. In the first wave, ratings regarding negative age-based metastereotypes, own-reputation threat, age group identification, and the older workers age threshold were obtained, and with a two-month time lag, the ratings on the two negative work attitudes were collected. In the first wave, for the sake of clarity of each scale, participants were informed that older workers are workers aged 50 or more. Out of the 606 surveys distributed at time 1, 423 complete surveys were returned in both waves, amounting to a response rate of 70 percent.

Structural equation modeling and bootstrapped moderated mediation analyses were performed on the data to test hypotheses. In order to test for the invariance of the proposed mediation model across different older workers age groups (hypothesis 8), a cut-off point corresponding to the participants belief about the co-workers opinion on the age one becomes older at work was used.

Lastly, a multiple moderated mediation model with two mediators operating in parallel was tested with a sample comprised of 469 blue-collar workers aged 50-to-63 (302 males, 166 females, 1 unknown) working in 14 manufacturing companies located in Portugal. 79% of the participants work in large companies. Most respondents were married (81%) and about 70% had only completed basic education. The average age of participants was 53.91 years old ($SD = 3.37$), the average tenure in the organization 23.87 years ($SD = 10.23$), and the average seniority in the job 19.37 years ($SD = 11.36$). Data were collected in two waves through paper-based surveys. In the first wave, the negative age-based metastereotypes, age-based stereotype threats, and HRM practices scales were administered and the participants' socio-demographic information was collected. About two months later, data regarding the organizational disidentification scale was collected. Out of the 606 surveys distributed at time 1, 469 were returned in both waves, amounting to a response rate of 77 percent.

Hypotheses were tested through the macro PROCESS v2.15 for SPSS Statistics (Hayes, 2013). Significance tests for the indirect effects were based on bias-corrected

confidence intervals (99%) derived from 10000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

3.5. Measures

Participants responded to all scales by indicating their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The scales used were the following:

Negative age-based metastereotypes - Three items tapped negative age-based metastereotypes held by older workers regarding younger workers beliefs about older workers. A sample item is “My younger colleagues feel that I contribute less because of my age.”

Own-reputation threat - This form of threat was measured using the three-item scale of Shapiro (2011). A sample item is “I am concerned that my actions could lead my colleagues to judge me based on the stereotypes about older workers.”

Group-reputation threat - Workers rated their experience of group-reputation threat at the workplace through a three-item scale designed by Shapiro (2011). E.g., “I am concerned that my actions might poorly represent older workers.”

Age group identification - Participants rated their age-group identification levels on a five-item scale developed by Garstka, Schmitt, Branscombe, and Hummert (2004). One item is “My age group is central to who I am as a person”.

Perceived HRM practices - Building on Hennekam and Herrbach (2013) measures, the perceived provision of HRM practices was assessed through three scales regarding job design – four items (e.g., “My organization creates new positions for older employees”), training – four items (e.g., “My organization offers training/education for older employees to keep their work skills up-to-date”), and recognition and respect – three items (e.g. “My organization ensures that older employees are treated with respect in the organization”).

Work disengagement - The disengagement from work scale of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2001) was used. Workers rated their work disengagement from items such as “It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way”.

Organizational disidentification - Organizational disidentification was measured with a six-item scale (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). A sample item is “I want people to know that I disagree with how this organization behaves.”

In addition, the following measures were also collected:

Older workers representation - Hinkin (1998) suggested that collecting data from sources other than the respondent is likely to reduce the concerns raised by the common source/common method bias. With that in mind, and whilst accepting the relevance of the measurement of perceived representation, the percentage of older workers in each organization was computed from employee files provided by HR managers.

Age diversity beliefs - Beliefs about age diversity were measured using a single-item measure adapted for age research from van Knippenberg, Haslam, and Platow (2007): “Creating groups that contain people from different age groups can be a recipe for trouble (reverse scored).” Even though single-item measures have raised concerns, research has clearly showed that these measures show sufficient reliability and validity (Nagy, 2002; Wanous & Hudy, 2001).

Older workers age threshold - A single item was used to rate participants’ belief about co-workers view of the age one becomes older at work: “In your opinion, from what age do your colleagues consider someone to be an *older worker*?”.

Given that previous research showed that organizational age composition might influence ageist attitudes and behaviors and that time is admittedly a key variable in ageism research (Kunze et al., 2011; Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2013), various control variables were included in the study. Chronological age, organizational tenure, and objective organizational age diversity (measured through standard deviation) were included as control variables in both steps of the study, whereas seniority in the job was included only in the second step.

A copy of the questionnaires used in the three waves of data collection is included in the Appendix.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

Chapter 4 brings together the main findings from the research. In order to facilitate the interpretation and the reading of the results, this chapter presents separately the key findings of the two steps of the study. Results are presented as follows: a) descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and scales' internal consistency; b) results of the analytical procedures, such as confirmatory factor analyses; and c) hypotheses testing results. The chapter ends with an integrated summary of the key findings of the two steps of the study.

As described in Chapter 3, statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 and AMOS 23. Confirmatory factor analyses were carried out in AMOS 23. All but hypotheses 4, 5, and 8 were tested using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. Testing of hypotheses 4, 5, and 8 was carried out through structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 23.

4.1. Older workers representation and stereotype threats

The first step of the current study addresses the following research questions: Does older workers representation trigger distinct forms of stereotype threat? Is the relationship between older workers representation and distinct forms of stereotype threat mediated by negative age-based metastereotypes? Are the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and distinct forms of stereotype threat moderated by age diversity beliefs? As described in the preceding chapter, a cross-sectional design was adopted with bootstrapped mediation and moderation analyses to test hypotheses formulated around the abovementioned research questions.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alphas where applicable. In line with the aforesaid theoretical background, the correlations between negative age-metastereotypes and other age-related constructs were statistically significant providing evidence of the convergent validity of the negative age-based metastereotypes scale.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients, and Correlations*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Older workers representation	.42	.08		-							
2. Negative age-based metastereotypes	2.06	1.07	.84	-.12**	-						
3. Own-reputation threat	1.96	1.12	.79	-.11**	.54***	-					
4. Group-reputation threat	2.28	1.06	.71	-.14**	.44***	.69***	-				
5. Age diversity beliefs	4.02	1.27		.07	-.27***	-.32***	-.33***	-			
6. Age	54.22	3.19		-.15**	.08	.02	.06	.01	-		
7. Objective organizational age diversity	9.55	0.84		-.20***	-.08	-.07	-.10*	.09	.04	-	
8. Organizational Tenure	23.71	10.45		-.09*	.04	-.01	.01	-.06	.12*	-.02	-

Note. $N > 436$ for all variables. Because objective organizational age diversity was conceptualized as separation, this variable was statistically operationalized through standard deviation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3 also shows that all scales have acceptable internal consistency alphas (above .70).

4.1.1. Analytical procedures and hypotheses testing

All predictor variables were standardized before the analysis, and all the results of this step of the study hold while controlling for age, objective organizational age diversity, and for organizational tenure.

In order to confirm the factorial structure of the scales included in this step of the study (negative age-based metastereotypes, own-reputation threat, and group-reputation threat), a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. All of the items loaded higher than .40 on their respective scales. The analysis showed that a three-factor model ($\chi^2(21, N = 470) = 69.87$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .97) fits the data better than a one factor-model ($\chi^2(24, N = 470) = 175.10$, RMSEA = .12, CFI = .91): χ^2 difference ($df = 3$) = 105.23, $p < .001$.

Hypotheses were tested using the Preacher and Hayes macro PROCESS for SPSS (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Kelley, 2011). Results from the mediation model indicate that older workers representation was negatively associated with group-reputation threat ($\beta = -.13$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), thus supporting hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1a stated that as older workers representation decreases, concerns about the ingroup reputation and image are likely to become more salient. In other words, mediation model results show that older workers underrepresentation is associated with higher levels of threat to the older workers' group reputation.

Consistent with the expectations, the results provided support for hypothesis 1b by showing that older workers representation is not related to own-reputation threat ($\beta = -.04$, $SE = .04$, $p = .34$). To put it simple, older workers representation is not related to concerns about their self-worth. Taken together, results regarding hypotheses 1a and 1b provide the initial evidence of the usefulness of a multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) for a better understanding of age-based stereotype threats in the workplace.

As expected, there is a significant indirect effect of older workers representation on own-reputation threat through negative age-based metastereotypes, $\beta = -.07$, BCa

99% CI [-.14, -.01], $\kappa^2 = .08$, BCa 99% CI [.01, .15], and on group-reputation threat through negative age-based metastereotypes, $\beta = -.05$, BCa 99% CI [-.11, -.01], $\kappa^2 = .06$, BCa 99% CI [.01, .11]. These results represent a small to medium indirect effect size (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) and support hypotheses 2a and 2b which stated that negative age-based metastereotypes mediate the relationship between older workers representation on one side and own-reputation threat, and group-reputation threat, on the other. These results indicate that older workers representation, besides being negatively associated with group-reputation threat (hypothesis 1a) is also related to the age-based metastereotyping process. Finkelstein et al. (2015) have suggested that age-based metastereotypes are likely to be more salient and more easily activated in contexts where workers feel that their age group is a minority in the workplace age demographics. Additionally, results show that negative age-based metastereotypes are associated with both own-reputation and group-reputation threats. These findings seem to confirm that since negative age-based metastereotypes are beliefs that refer to negative age stereotypes held by other age groups about one's age group, they may activate concerns that target both age group reputation and older workers' self-image.

For the purposes of moderated mediation analyses, model 14 of the PROCESS macro was used. Results concerning the moderating effect of age diversity beliefs only support hypothesis 3a that proposed positive beliefs about age diversity as a boundary condition of own-reputation threat. As shown in Table 4, age diversity beliefs moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat, but no moderator effect was found on the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and group-reputation threat ($\beta = -.04$, $SE = .04$, $p = .31$), and therefore hypothesis 3b was not supported. This result indicates that understanding age diversity as an advantage does not influence to any extent concerns about older workers' ingroup reputation. In addition, it provides further evidence of the usefulness of a multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). Yet, age diversity beliefs interact with negative age-based metastereotypes to moderate own-reputation threat in a significant way, $\beta = -.09$, 99% CI [-.17, -.01], $t = -2.70$, $p < .01$, indicating that the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat is weakened by age diversity beliefs.

Table 4. *Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Own-reputation threat and Group-reputation threat*

Variable	Second stage dependent variable = Own-reputation threat			Second stage dependent variable = Group-reputation threat		
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Negative age-based metastereotypes	.44	.05	9.73***	.35	.05	6.95***
Age diversity beliefs	-.12	.04	-3.15**	-.15	.04	-3.42***
Negative age-based metastereotypes X Age diversity beliefs	-.09	.03	-2.70**	-.04	.04	-1.03
F		25.67***			18.37***	
R^2		.32			.23	

Note. $N > 385$ for all variables. Values in bold are relevant to test hypotheses. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

A graphical depiction of this interaction effect is shown in Figure 2. When age diversity beliefs are high, the effect of negative age-based metastereotypes on own-reputation threat is weakened, suggesting that nurturing older workers age diversity beliefs might be a promising way to deter this form of age threats in the workplace.

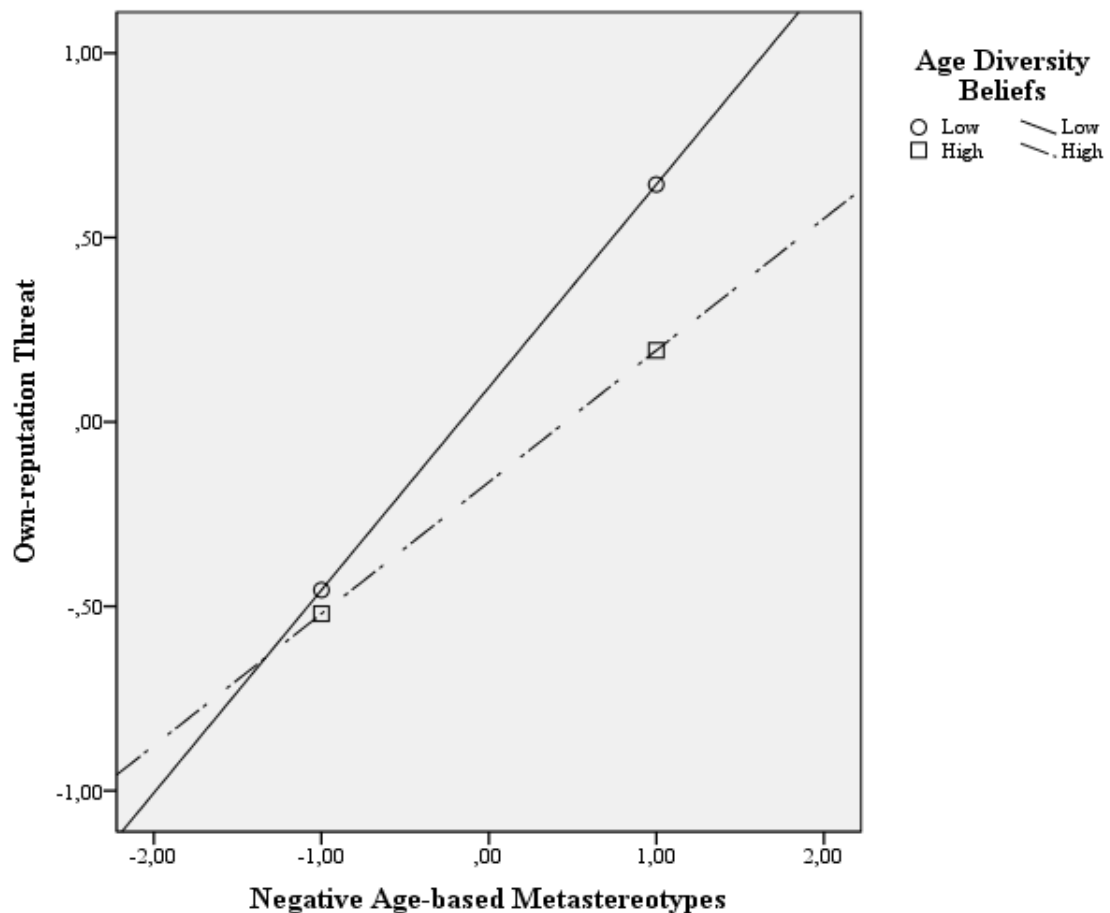


Figure 2. Interaction effect of negative age-based metastereotypes and age diversity beliefs on own-reputation threat

Note. High and low levels of age diversity beliefs represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

4.2. Psychological outcomes and perceived HRM practices

The second step of the current study examines the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes held by older workers, age-based stereotype threat,

and negative work attitudes like work disengagement and organizational disidentification. Furthermore, hypotheses stating that own-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and those psychological outcomes, and that this mediation role is invariant among older workers are tested. Finally, it is analyzed whether age group identification intensifies the relationship between own-reputation threat and psychological outcomes.

Structural equation modeling analyses were performed to test mediation hypotheses and the invariance of the model, whereas the interaction effect was tested through the Preacher and Hayes macro PROCESS v2.15 for SPSS (Hayes, 2013).

Descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and reliabilities are presented in Table 5. In line with previous research that found positive moderate correlations between negative age-based metastereotypes and intention to retire (Bal et al., 2015) and also with von Hippel et al.'s (2013) findings of moderate to strong negative relationships between stereotype threat and job satisfaction and organizational commitment - though the reported measure of stereotype threat actually captured metastereotypes - both negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threat were positively related to negative work attitudes.

Participants set 54.75 as the threshold for an employee to be identified as an older worker by his colleagues in the manufacturing sector. This result is in line with the threshold of around 53 years old found by other researchers in Portugal (Fula et al., 2012). While it is admitted that over time, as interpersonal relations develop, more information is obtained and, as such, underlying characteristics like attitudes, preferences, and values tend to replace initial superficial categorizations and group stereotypes, it was interesting to note that organizational tenure and seniority were neither significantly correlated with negative age-based metastereotypes, nor with stereotype threat. All mediation model variables were positively and weakly correlated with age group identification.

Given that age was positively correlated with age group identification, an independent groups *t* test was conducted. The cut-off point of 54.75 was used to create two groups (the *younger-older workers* aged 50-to-54, and the *older-older workers* aged 55-to-59).

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Negative age-based metastereotypes	2.16	1.08	(.76)								
2. Own-reputation threat	2.01	1.12	.33**	(.80)							
3. Work disengagement	2.04	.82	.60**	.56**	(.81)						
4. Organizational disidentification	2.02	.92	.57**	.39**	.72**	(.79)					
5. Age group identification	3.72	1.15	.13**	.11**	.19**	.19**	(.83)				
6. Age	53.96	3.13	.07	.04	.08	.06	.28**	-			
7. Organizational Tenure	24.42	10.51	.01	.02	-.02	.02	.23**	.14**	-		
8. Seniority in the job	19.49	11.46	.00	.08	.06	.04	.16**	.15**	.51**	-	
9. Older workers age threshold	54.75	7.05	.11*	.16**	.12*	.06	.18**	.24**	.18**	.10	-

Note. ** $p < .01$ level (two-tailed), $N > 341$ for all variables. Reliabilities (coefficient alpha) are in parentheses.

Interestingly, results demonstrated that the older-older workers showed higher levels of ingroup identification than the younger-older workers, $t(300) = 3.71, p < .001$.

4.2.1. Analytical procedures and hypotheses testing (single mediator model)

4.2.1.1. Measurement model

To establish whether the ageism constructs (negative age-based metastereotypes, and own-reputation threat) are discrete, a CFA analysis in the AMOS 23 program was conducted. The two-factor model was a significantly better fit than the one-factor model: χ^2 difference ($df = 1$) = 243.57, $p < .001$, thus representing the best fit to the data. The fit of a four-factor model reflecting negative age-based metastereotypes, own-reputation threat, work disengagement, and organizational disidentification was also examined (see Table 6), and compared with that of a three-factor model that retained the two work attitudes factors, and combined all ageism items into a single factor. The four-factor model (reflecting two ageism factors) was a significantly better fit than the three-factor model: χ^2 difference ($df = 3$) = 299.76, $p < .001$. All the items loaded significantly and above .40 onto their respective factors ($p < .001$) in the four-factor model.

Table 6. *Confirmatory Factor Analyses*

Item	χ^2	<i>Df</i>	RMSEA	IFI	CFI
Ageism items only					
Two-factor model	9.44	8	.02	.99	.99
One-factor model	253.01	9	.25	.69	.68
Ageism and work attitudes items					
Four-factor model	352.47	162	.05	.94	.94
Three-factor model	652.23	165	.08	.84	.84

Note. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; IFI = incremental fit index; CFI = comparative fit index.

4.2.1.2. Structural model

Prior research does not provide a definitive rationale for whether own-reputation threat will partially or fully mediate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and work attitudes. Although partial mediation has been suggested as the most likely in psychology research (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the recommendation of James, Mulaik, and Brett (2006) was followed, according to which full mediation represents the best choice of a baseline model. Yet, because the literature is not conclusive in this regard, a partially mediated model was also explored. Both models were analyzed through structural equation modeling using the AMOS 23 program. To test whether own-reputation threat mediated the relationship between negative age metastereotypes and negative work attitudes, bias-corrected bootstrapping with 2000 bootstrap resamples to generate estimates and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) of indirect effects were used (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Fit indices indicate a good fit of the partially mediated model: χ^2 ($df = 162$) = 352.47 (root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05, incremental fit index [IFI] = .94, and comparative fit index [CFI] = .94, and an acceptable fit of the fully mediated model: χ^2 ($df = 164$) = 496.57 (RMSEA = .07, IFI = .89, and CFI = .89). The partial mediation model provides a significantly better fit to the data than the fully mediated model: χ^2 difference ($df = 2$) = 144.10, $p < .001$. In the partially mediated model, negative age-based metastereotypes exerted a significant direct effect on own-reputation threat ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$), with an R^2 for variance explained of .16, and significant direct effects on work disengagement ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$), and organizational disidentification ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$). Own-reputation threat in turn exerted a significant effect on work disengagement ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$), and on organizational disidentification ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). There were significant indirect effects of negative age-based metastereotypes through own-reputation threat on work disengagement ($\beta = .18$, 95% CI [.08, .20], $p < .001$), and on organizational disidentification ($\beta = .10$, 95% CI [.05, .16], $p < .001$). This represents a significant small to medium indirect effect size (Preacher & Kelley, 2011). Overall, the partially mediated model explained 73% of the work disengagement variance, and 65% of the organizational disidentification variance. Taken together, these results support hypotheses 4 and 5 which stated that the

relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes are mediated by own-reputation threat. In other words, the positive association between negative age-based metastereotypes held by older workers and negative work attitudes is partly mediated by older workers' concerns about their self-image and reputation. This suggests that when older workers hold negative opinions about younger co-workers beliefs toward older workers, they are likely to develop work disengagement and organizational disidentification as coping mechanisms to deal with such negative metabeliefs. Furthermore, results indicate that negative metabeliefs are positively associated with emotional responses such as worry and concern (own-reputation threat), and that this kind of response has a positive relationship with the two negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification). All in all, results show direct and mediated effects of negative age-based metastereotypes on work disengagement and organizational disidentification, which suggest the importance of the integration of negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats on a single analytical framework.

4.2.1.3. Interaction effect of age group identification

The moderation effect of age group identification on the relationships between own-reputation threat and the two negative work attitudes was tested through conceptual model 14 of the Preacher and Hayes macro PROCESS v2.15 for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). Moderated mediation analyses were based on bias-corrected confidence intervals (95%) derived from 2000 bootstrapped samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The tests of hypotheses were conducted with and without the control variables and the results remained unchanged.

Hypotheses 6 and 7 postulated, respectively, that the positive relationships between own-reputation threat and work disengagement and organizational disidentification are stronger when age group identification is higher rather than lower. The two hypotheses were supported by results from the moderated mediation model. Results indicated that the interaction of own-reputation threat with age group identification was significant in predicting work disengagement ($\beta = .10$, 95% CI [.01, .20], $p < .01$) and organizational disidentification ($\beta = .12$, 95% CI [.03, .21], $p < .01$).

Age group identification moderated the relationship between own-reputation threat and work disengagement (high-identifiers simple slope = .67, $t = 10.75$, $p < .001$, low-identifiers simple slope = .38, $t = 5.58$, $p < .001$) and organizational disidentification (high-identifiers simple slope = .51, $t = 7.95$, $p < .001$, low-identifiers simple slope = .17, $t = 2.73$, $p < .01$). Figures 3 and 4 show that older workers with higher levels of age group identification experience higher levels of negative work attitudes than those with lower levels of age group identification.

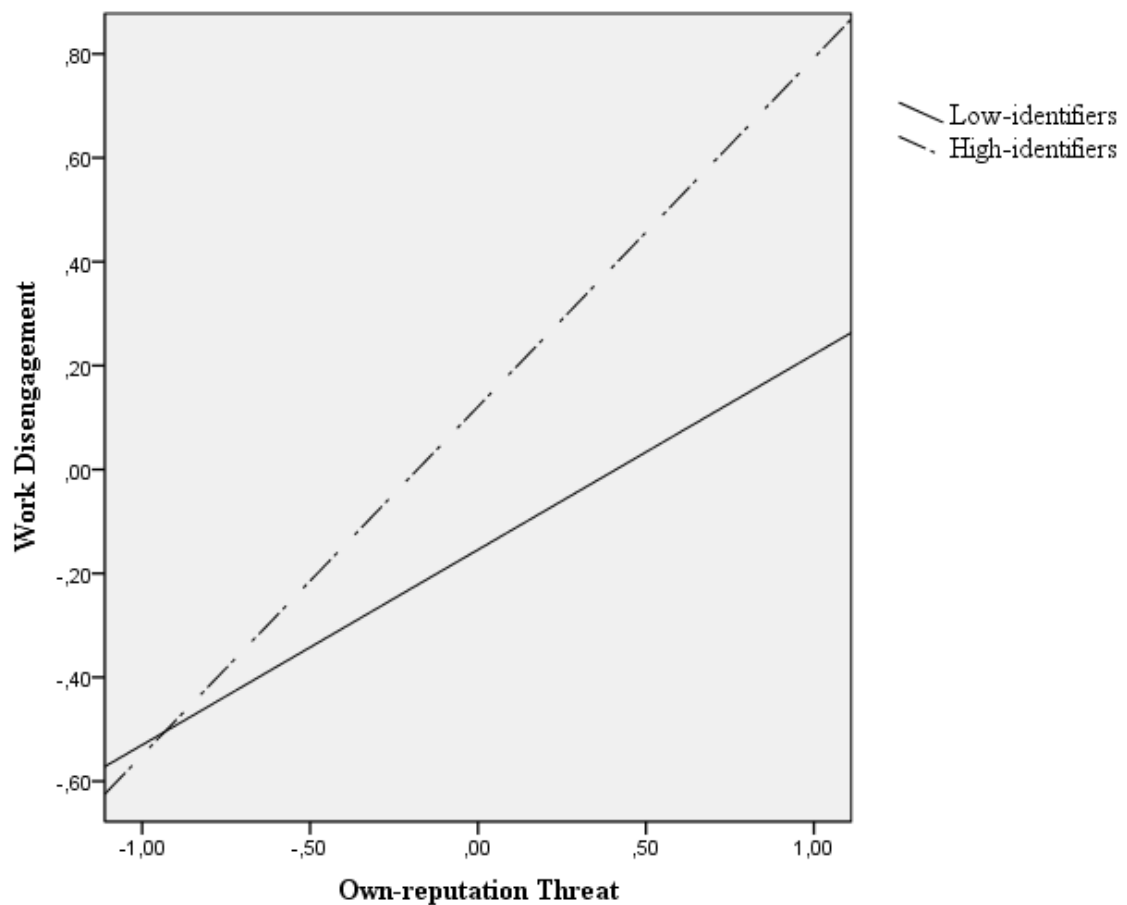


Figure 3. Interaction effect of own-reputation threat with age group identification on work disengagement

Note. High and low levels of age group identification represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

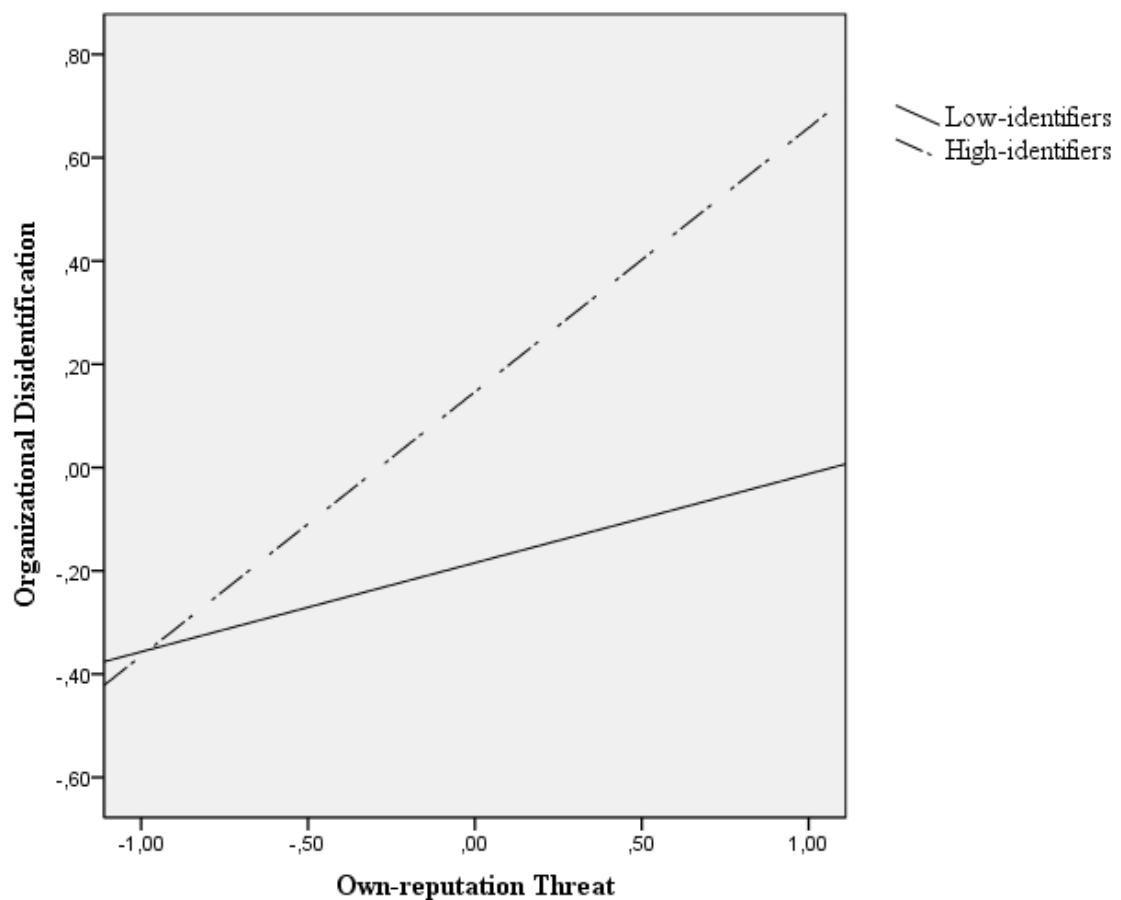


Figure 4. Interaction effect of own-reputation threat with age group identification on organizational disidentification

Note. High and low levels of age group identification represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

4.2.1.4. Age Group Invariance

A multigroup modeling approach of the measurement model and of the structural model (Byrne, 2008) was followed to investigate whether the mediation model was equivalent across older workers' age groups (hypothesis 8). Given that for multi-group modeling the rule of thumb is 100 cases per group (Kline, 2005), two age groups were created leaving the 18 workers aged over 59 out of the analysis. Using the aforementioned cut-off point of 54.75, the two age groups were the *younger-older workers* (125 cases, 30% of the participants) and the *older-older workers* (280 cases, 66% of the participants).

The measurement model for both groups revealed that all items loaded significantly onto their factors ($p < .001$). The constrained models in which the factor loadings and factor variances and covariances were constrained equal across age groups did not show a statistically significant worse fit than the unconstrained measurement model (factor loadings: $\chi^2_{dif}(16) = 9.18, p = 0.91$; factor variances and covariances: $\chi^2_{dif}(26) = 20.86, p = 0.75$). In the same vein, the ΔCFI did not exceed the .01 threshold (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). These results support the invariance of the measurement model across *younger-older workers* and *older-older workers*. Given that equivalence of the measurement model has been established, the structural noninvariance could then be investigated. Table 7 reports goodness-of-fit statistics related to the two-group unconstrained model (configural model), and to three constrained models. The chi-square value of 555.70 with 324 *df* provides the baseline against which subsequent tests for invariance are compared. CFI (.92) and RMSEA (.04) of the configural model represented a good fit across the two groups. Chi-square differences between each of the three unconstrained models and the constrained model are not statistically significant, and the CFI variation between models does not exceed .01 (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

Table 7. *Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Tests of Invariance*

Model Description	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ Statistical		CFI	RMSEA
				<i>df</i>	Significance		
Unconstrained	555.70	324	-	-	-	.92	.04
Measurement weights	564.90	340	9.20	16	.91	.93	.04
Structural weights	566.97	345	11.27	21	.96	.93	.04
Structural covariances	567.37	346	11.67	22	.96	.93	.04

Note. $\Delta\chi^2$ = difference in chi-square values between models and the unconstrained model; Δdf = difference in number of degrees of freedom between models and the constrained model; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index.

Provided with this information, it is assumed that the structural model is invariant across the two age groups supporting hypothesis 8. This indicates that the partially mediated model predicts negative work attitudes equally across older workers of different ages, and that both negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat play a significant role in triggering those negative work attitudes.

Given that the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) suggested that distinct forms of threat may co-occur mainly due to the fact that some threats share common eliciting conditions, the current study examines further the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes, age-based stereotype threats, and organizational disidentification. In this second moment of the second step of the study, multiple mediation analysis with mediators operating in parallel (own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat) tested the co-occurrence of core threats in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification. Additionally, building on the social identity approach and the HRM literature, the moderator role of perceived HRM practices in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and age threats was also examined.

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alphas (where applicable). All scales have internal consistency alphas above .70. Among the control variables, objective organizational age diversity, organizational tenure, and seniority in the job were not correlated with any of the focal variables. Following recommendations from Carlson and Wu (2012), these control variables were excluded from further analyses. All predictor variables were standardized before analysis.

Given that age had a weak positive correlation ($r = .12, p < .05$) with negative age-based metastereotypes indicating that reported levels of negative age-based metastereotypes are higher as one ages, a Mann-Whitney U test (data not normally distributed) was conducted to determine whether there was a difference in the negative age-based metastereotypes levels between workers aged 50-to-54 ($n = 254$) and workers aged 55-to-59 ($n = 158$). Negative age-based metastereotypes levels were greater for workers aged 55-to-59 (mean rank = 226.90) than for workers aged 50-to-54 (mean rank = 193.81), $U = 16842.50, z = -2.79, p = .005$, and the difference between the groups was small ($r = -.14, p < .01$).

Table 8. *Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients, and Bivariate Correlations*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Negative age-based metastereotypes	449	2.07	1.08	.75	-										
2. Own-reputation threat	445	1.95	1.11	.81	.57**	-									
3. Group-reputation threat	439	2.29	1.08	.73	.47**	.70**	-								
4. Organizational disidentification	416	2.03	.90	.78	.56**	.39**	.39**	-							
5. Job design	445	3.06	.93	.75	-.10*	.03	.01	-.14**	-						
6. Training	439	3.02	.97	.75	.27**	.22**	.15**	.14**	.21**	-					
7. Recognition and respect	439	4.08	.82	.84	.01	-.02	-.06	-.03	.02	-.03	-				
8. Age	436	53.91	3.37		.12*	-.04	.05	.09	-.03	.06	.01	-			
9. Objective organizational age diversity	377	9.57	.84		-.08	-.08	-.08	-.08	.07	-.04	.05	.04	-		
10. Organizational tenure	435	23.87	10.23		.08	.03	.04	.08	-.04	-.04	.03	.16**	-.02	-	
11. Seniority in the job	404	19.37	11.36		.03	.04	.02	.08	-.06	.03	-.05	.16**	.04	.49**	-

Note. Because objective organizational age diversity was conceptualized as separation, this variable was statistically operationalized through standard deviation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Bivariate correlations show a mixed association pattern between HRM practices and focal variables. Training was positively related to all ageism measures and to organizational disidentification, whereas job design was negatively related to negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification.

4.2.2. Analytical procedures and hypotheses testing (two mediators model)

4.2.2.1. Measurement Model

In order to confirm the factorial structure of the scales under study (negative age-based metastereotypes, own-reputation threat, group-reputation threat, and organizational disidentification), and whether the four constructs are discrete, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. All the items were loaded onto their respective factors. The analysis showed that a four-factor model ($\chi^2(81, N = 469) = 282.83$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .93) fits the data better than a one factor-model ($\chi^2(87, N = 469) = 667.14$, RMSEA = .12, CFI = .80): χ^2 difference ($df = 6$) = 384.31, $p < .001$., and than a three-factor model in which own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat items loaded onto the same factor ($\chi^2(84, N = 469) = 387.91$, RMSEA = .09, CFI = .89): χ^2 difference ($df = 3$) = 105.08, $p < .001$. This suggests that the variables are distinct.

Hypotheses were tested through model 7 of the Preacher and Hayes macro PROCESS v2.15 for SPSS Statistics (Hayes, 2013). Tests of hypotheses were conducted with and without the control variable age and the results remained unchanged. Results from the multiple mediation model indicate that negative age-based metastereotypes are positively associated with own-reputation threat ($\beta = .52$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$) and with group-reputation threat ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$). Hence, hypotheses 9 and 10 that established positive relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and core threats are supported. These results are consistent with previous claims which argued that metastereotypes are among the stereotype threat eliciting conditions (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Voyles et al., 2014). Moreover, they reinforce the usefulness of the articulation between the metastereotype and the stereotype threat literature. Hypothesis 11 stated that negative age-based

metastereotypes are positively related to organizational disidentification. As predicted, these two constructs are positively associated ($\beta = .46$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$). Interestingly and contrary to expectations, while group-reputation threat is positively associated with organizational disidentification ($\beta = .17$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$), the relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification is not significant ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .07$, $p = .60$). Thus, the mediation effect of own-reputation threat on the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification predicted by hypothesis 12 is not supported. However, there is a significant indirect effect of negative age-based metastereotypes on organizational disidentification through group-reputation threat, $\beta = .07$, BCa 99% CI [.01, .14]. This represents a significant small to medium indirect effect size (Preacher & Kelley, 2011). Taken together, results are consistent with the idea that group-reputation threat mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification, thus supporting hypothesis 13. Results from the multiple mediation model with two mediators operating in parallel (own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat) suggest that core threats may co-occur. More importantly, these results are in line with findings from the first step study which indicated that distinct forms of threat do not share common antecedents or boundary conditions (see for example results regarding H1a, H1b, H3a, and H3b).

Hypotheses 14a and 14b predicted that job design and training would heighten the positive relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and both own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat, respectively. Table 9 shows that job design and training indeed strengthen own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat.

The moderation effect of training is stronger for group-reputation threat ($\beta = .32$, 99% CI [.22, .41], $p < .001$) than for own-reputation threat ($\beta = .18$, 99% CI [.08, .28], $p < .001$), whereas the magnitude of the moderation effect of job design is similar on both forms of threat. The conditional indirect effect for group-reputation was significant across high and average levels of training ($p < .001$), across all levels of job design ($p < .001$), but it was not significant across low levels of training ($p = .46$). Moreover, for all levels of training and job design, the conditional indirect effect for own-reputation was significant ($p < .001$).

Table 9. *Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Own-reputation threat and Group-reputation threat*

Variable	First stage dependent variable = Own-reputation threat					First stage dependent variable = Group-reputation threat				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Negative age-based metastereotypes	.53	.04	12.68***			.43	.04	10.02***		
Job design	.09	.04	2.08*	60.48***	.33	.04	.05	.80	50.74***	.23
Negative age-based metastereotypes X Job design	.12	.03	3.63***			.16	.04	4.16***		
Negative age-based metastereotypes	.45	.05	9.55***			.33	.05	7.26***		
Training	.05	.04	1.44	62.04***	.35	-.00	.04	-.06	74.88***	.33
Negative age-based metastereotypes X Training	.18	.04	4.76***			.32	.04	8.60***		
Negative age-based metastereotypes	.54	.05	11.65***			.43	.05	9.10***		
Recognition and respect	-.05	.04	-1.21	59.84***	.35	-.10	.04	-2.25*	37.43***	.24
Negative age-based metastereotypes X Recognition and respect	-.14	.05	-3.05**			-.14	.04	-3.30**		

Note. $N > 334$ for all variables. Values in bold are relevant to test hypotheses. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Taken together, the results support hypotheses 14a and 14b and corroborate the idea that the stereotype threat framework benefits from more scholarship on the effects of HRM practices (Kulik, 2014b). Results are consistent with social identity approach tenets and with previous research that found a backlash from HRM practices that target specifically older workers (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2013, 2015). Findings suggest that age-awareness practices like job design and training reinforce age-based stereotype threats among older workers. This type of practices is likely to cue age as a stigmatizable characteristic in the workplace, which in turn may drive heightened levels of threat among older workers. Figures 5 and 6 depict the strongest interaction effects observed, that is, the significant moderation effects of training on own-reputation threat and on group-reputation threat, respectively.

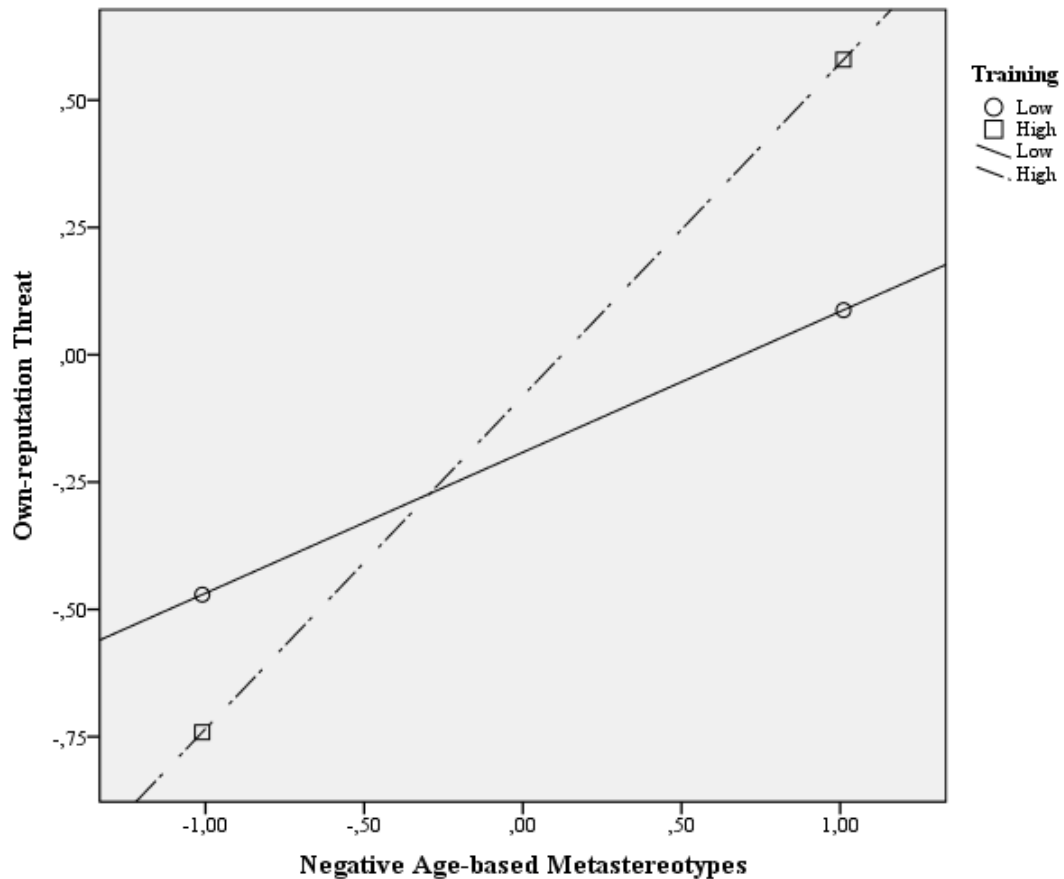


Figure 5. Interaction effect of negative age-based metastereotypes with training on own-reputation threat

Note. High and low levels of training represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

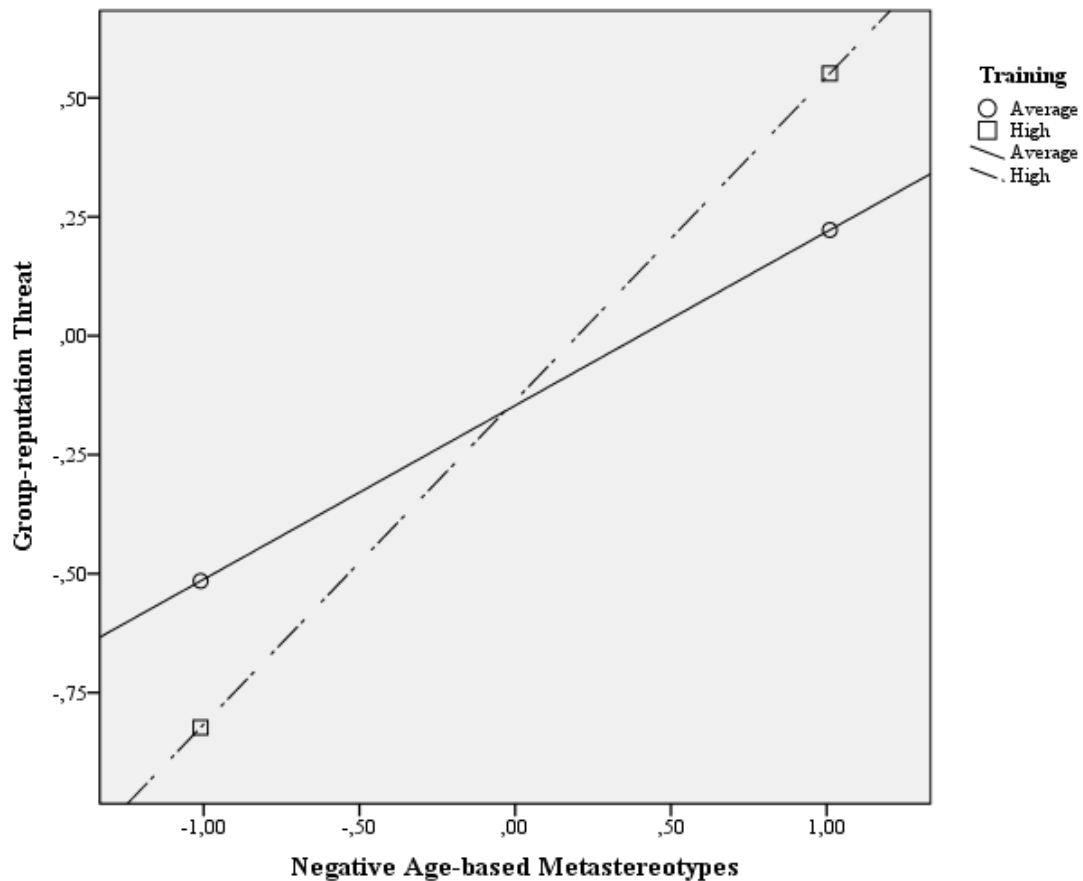


Figure 6. Interaction effect of negative age-based metastereotypes with training on group-reputation threat

Note. Average and high levels of training represent the mean and one standard deviation above the mean, respectively.

In addition, moderated mediation analyses indicated that recognition and respect buffer own-reputation threat ($\beta = -.14$, 99% CI $[-.26, -.02]$, $p < .05$) and group-reputation threat ($\beta = -.14$, 99% CI $[-.26, -.03]$, $p < .05$) as predicted by hypotheses 15a and 15b, correspondingly. For all levels of recognition and respect, the conditional indirect effect for own-reputation threat and group-reputation was significant ($p < .001$). These results indicate that unlike job design and training, recognition and respect allow older workers to construct a positive social identity in the workplace (Kulik, 2014b). Given that recognition and respect provide value and inclusion for stereotyped individuals (Guillaume et al., 2013), age-based stereotype threats are alleviated. Given the similarity of the moderation effect, Figure 7 depicts just

the significant negative interaction effect of negative age-based metastereotypes with recognition and respect on group-reputation threat.

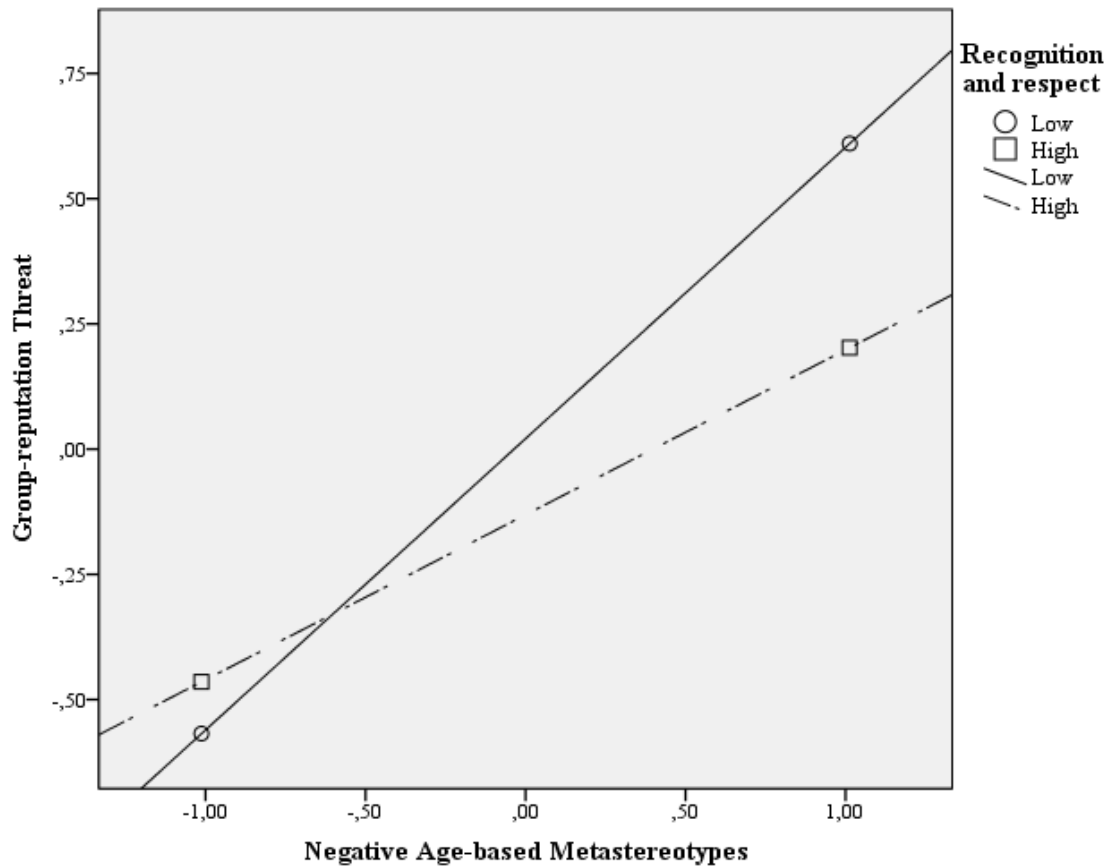


Figure 7. Interaction effect of negative age-based metastereotypes with recognition and respect on group-reputation threat

Note. High and low levels of recognition and respect represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

4.3. Summary of key findings

The results of the first step of the study indicate that older workers representation is negatively associated with age-based stereotype threat, but only when the threat targets the ingroup reputation of older workers (group-reputation threat). In this way, the current study shows that, in addition to individual beliefs, situational features such as the older workers representation in the workplace have the potential to prompt age-based stereotype threat among older workers. Findings provide support for

a partially mediated relationship between older workers representation and age-based stereotype threats through negative-age-based metastereotypes. This suggests that the organizational context influences metastereotyping (Finkelstein et al., 2015). In fact, research findings seem to be consistent with the age-based metastereotype activation model prediction that age-based metastereotypes are likely to be more salient in contexts in which age subgrouping is apparent (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Hence, besides being an age-based stereotype threat antecedent, older workers representation also impacts the age-based metastereotyping process because underrepresentation of this age group makes age stereotypes more salient. Furthermore, results show a significant moderation effect of age diversity beliefs in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat. Specifically, age diversity beliefs alleviate the likelihood of older workers experiencing concerns about their self-image. Given that age diversity beliefs do not moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and group-reputation threat, this study's findings support the usefulness of the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) as the two distinct forms of age-based stereotype threat are not influenced by age diversity beliefs in a similar way.

As regards the second step, results show that own-reputation threat partially mediates the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification) equally across age groups (50-54; 55-59). Bootstrapped moderated mediation indicates that age group identification strengthens the positive relationships between own-reputation threat and negative work attitudes, thus exacerbating stereotype threat attitudinal effects. Moreover, results showed a strong positive relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes, confirming that negative age metabeliefs may call into question the quality of intergenerational dynamics in the workplace (Shiu et al., 2015). Overall, findings from the single mediation model suggest that older workers interpret age negative metastereotypes as an identity threat, which in turn is positively related with undesirable work attitudes.

Additionally, multiple mediation model results indicate that negative age-based metastereotypes correlate with core stereotype threats, but organizational disidentification is only related with group-reputation threat. Moderation results showed that age-awareness HRM practices (job design and training) reinforce age threats,

whereas general HRM practices (recognition and respect) impair them. This study's findings suggest that core threats may co-occur and that the disregard for the various forms stereotype threat can take may mislead research findings, as well as diminish workplace interventions' effectiveness.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

In recent years, demographic trends such as declining mortality and fertility rates together with the increased life expectancy are shaping new age structures in most Western countries (Schröder et al., 2014), and as a result workforces are greying (Kulik, 2014a). In Portugal, for example, the labor force aged over 44 years old increased by 4% since 2000 (Statistics Portugal, 2012). Furthermore, some governments are providing incentives to increase the older workers employment rates given that the early retirement scheme is no longer sustainable (Eurofound, 2013). Against this background, attention needs to be directed toward the multilevel implications of ageing workforces (Boehm et al., 2014). Firstly, ageing workforces may increase the likelihood of intergenerational tensions between younger and older workers (North & Fiske, 2015), particularly in those economies where employment is an increasingly scarce resource. These tensions may even escalate, especially when negative age stereotypes and metastereotypes are prevalent (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Secondly, in Western societies, younger workers are often seen as more desirable members of the workforce than older workers (Stone & Tetrick, 2013). For this reason, the concerns, motivations, and preferences of the older worker may be overlooked (Fineman, 2011), which may prevent older workers from getting fully engaged at work and identified with the organization. Thirdly, since negative stereotypes about older workers are widespread (Ng & Feldman, 2012), and that stereotypical beliefs tend to change very slowly (Tajfel, 1959), it is admitted that older workers will experience stereotype threat in the workplace (Kalokerinos et al., 2014).

On the basis of the abovementioned background and given that existing accounts on workplace ageism have not treated the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers in much detail (Kalokerinos et al., 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011), this study contributes to the ageism scholarship by examining stereotype threat antecedents, attitudinal outcomes, and boundary conditions.

With that in mind, this research aims to examine:

- 1) the relationship between older workers representation, negative age-based metastereotypes, and age-based stereotype threats (own-reputation and group-reputation). In addition, to analyze whether

- age diversity beliefs and perceived HRM practices (job design, training, and recognition and respect) moderate the older workers vulnerability to those age-based stereotype threats;
- 2) the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes, age-based stereotype threats and negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification). In addition, to analyze the moderating role played by age group identification in the relationship between own-reputation threat and the abovementioned negative work attitudes;
 - 3) the usefulness of the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) and the age metastereotype activation model (Finkelstein et al., 2015) for a better understanding of the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers.

In this chapter research findings already presented in the Chapter 4 are further explored and integrated with the extant literature presented in Chapter 2. It does so by addressing findings about age-based stereotype threat eliciting factors, boundary conditions, and outcomes.

5.1. Age-based stereotype threat eliciting factors

Both steps of the study were set out with the purpose of addressing age-based stereotype threat eliciting factors. Specifically, the first step aimed to extend the scholarship on the minority representation effects on stereotype threat, in particular regarding older workers age threats in the manufacturing industry. Findings indicate that representation is indeed a potential source of age-based stereotype threat, but only when the threat targets the ingroup reputation (group-reputation threat). Representation is not related to older workers' concerns about self-worth and own-reputation. It appears that the underrepresentation is only associated with increased older workers vulnerability to the group-reputation threat. This suggests that representation is a situational cue that exacerbates only specific forms of stereotype threat in the workplace, thus providing support for calls for a multi-threat framework (Shapiro &

Neuberg, 2007). In addition, this study adds representation as a relevant contextual factor contributing to the age-based metastereotype activation model advanced by Finkelstein et al. (2015). A conceivable explanation for this might be that the underrepresentation of older workers cues age differences in the workplace making those differences more salient, which in turn prompt negative age-based metastereotypes. The results did show that negative age-based metastereotypes are antecedents of the two distinct forms of stereotype threat under examination - own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat. These findings also confirm Voyles et al.'s (2014) suggestion that age-based metastereotypes are likely to trigger stereotype threat. Moreover, negative age-based metastereotypes were found to have an indirect effect on the relationship between older workers representation and group-reputation threat and own-reputation threat. Taken together, these findings support the cross-fertilization between the age-based metastereotype activation model (Finkelstein et al., 2015) and the age-based stereotype threat nomological network.

Results from the second step show that negative metabeliefs, namely negative age-based metastereotypes, are positively associated with own-reputation threat suggesting that the worry and concern that characterize the stereotype threat experience may be triggered by negative age-based metastereotypes. In other words, negative age-based metastereotypes may be behind older workers emotional response to age threats in the workplace. In the same vein, multiple mediation model findings provided further support for the inclusion of negative age-based metastereotypes in the age-based stereotype threat nomological network. Results showed that negative age-based metastereotypes were antecedents of stereotype threat, as suggested by Voyles et al. (2014), eliciting both own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat.

Overall, findings about age-based stereotype threat eliciting factors suggest that a more comprehensive view of workplace age dynamics might be attained through the articulation and integration of negative age-based metastereotypes and distinct forms of age-based stereotype threat on a single analytical framework. As described earlier, negative age-based metastereotypes are beliefs about negative stereotypes held by outgroups that target one's ingroup. As older workers negative metabeliefs become more salient, stigmatized individuals may react by challenging, avoiding or feeling threatened by the metastereotype (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Research findings are in

line with the last suggested reaction, suggesting that older workers interpret negative metastereotypes as threats. Thus, negative metastereotypical beliefs are likely to trigger emotions such as worry and concern, that is, emotions associated with the age-based stereotype threat experience. Negative age-based metastereotypes are therefore under the spotlight, particularly in a context of increasing age diversity in the workplace, and more importantly because good relationships with co-workers are among the most relevant drivers of older workers' job satisfaction (Drabe et al., 2015).

Another interesting result regarding age-based stereotype threat antecedents arose with respect to stereotype threat multidimensionality (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). As expected, findings about the relationship between older workers representation and two distinct forms of stereotype threat (own-reputation threat and group-reputation threat) evinced a statistically significant relationship with only one of the core threats. This seems to indicate that older workers representation is not a common antecedent of these core threats, and thus reinforces the usefulness of a multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007).

5.2. Age-based stereotype threat moderators

This study addressed different age-based stereotype threat moderators. The first step of the study was set out aiming to examine the role played by age diversity beliefs in the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats. In the second step, the focus was on how does age group identification moderate the relationship between own-reputation threat and negative work attitudes (work disengagement and organizational disidentification). Moreover, the moderating role played by perceived HRM practices on the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats in the workplace was assessed.

Regarding specifically the first step of this study, the moderator analyses provided mixed results. Age diversity beliefs moderated the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats, but only in the case of own-reputation threat. Surprisingly, age diversity beliefs did not yield a significant effect on group-reputation threat. This result may be explained by the fact that negative

age-based metastereotypes cancel out the upside effects of diversity beliefs with respect to group reputation. As negative metastereotypes constrain the desire for a positive image of the ingroup, age diversity beliefs are likely to be influenced by those metastereotypes and herewith losing its potential to hamper age threats. On the other hand, understanding age diversity as an advantage and not a risk might protect one's self-image from the harmful effects of negative age-based metastereotypes because they refer, above all, to one's ingroup reputation. Age diversity beliefs are an individual difference that seems to limit the threat targeted to the self. As a result, the worry and concern elicited by negative age-based metastereotypes are alleviated. These findings are in line with one of the tenets of Shapiro and Neuberg's (2007) multi-threat model whereby different forms of threat are likely to be moderated by distinct boundary conditions. In addition, the current study extended the research on the difference between group-reputation and own-reputation threats to field settings, supporting the view that these two threats are distinct constructs as reported in experimental work conducted by Shapiro et al. (2013). In sum, moderation findings reinforce the worth of a stereotype multi-threat framework as age diversity beliefs yielded different effects on each of the two different threats under analysis in this study. Then, group-reputation threat and own-reputation threat can be experienced independently of one another since representation was related only to the former, thus confirming that threats do not always share common eliciting conditions. In other words, age-based metastereotypes are important stereotype threat drivers that should systematically be involved in identity threat research whenever team work is required.

Moderation findings of the current study contribute to a better understanding of the stereotype threat nomological network by showing that age group identification is a significant boundary condition of own-reputation threat in the workplace. Older workers who identify strongly with their age group showed higher levels of work disengagement and organizational disidentification than those with lower levels of identification. While the debate about the role age group identification plays regarding stigmatized groups still endures, for instance regarding the dissociation and disidentification with older individuals' age group (Cary et al., 2013; Weiss & Lang, 2012) as a result of positive identity-based strategies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this study's results show that the positive relationship between age identity threat and its psychological outcomes is

heightened by high levels of age group identification. This result is consistent with previous findings (Barbier et al., 2013; McCoy & Major, 2003) and shows that age group identification influences threats perceived to target individuals' self-worth, that is, own-reputation threats. Given that the multi-threat framework suggested group identification as a boundary condition of core threats perceived to target in particular the ingroup reputation (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), this research adds to the current literature by showing that group identification moderating role should be extended to own-reputation threats alike. Additionally, as older workers are a devalued group in the workplace (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), high-identifiers with the ingroup are likely to experience added job strain. To some extent, it is plausible that older workers cope with such a social demand in the workplace through heightened disengagement and disidentification.

As described, the study also assessed whether perceived HRM practices such as job design, training, and recognition and respect moderate the positive relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats in the workplace. Results confirmed that job design, training, and recognition and respect play a role in the age-based metastereotype activation model suggesting that core-self evaluations and workplace interventions moderate workers' reactions to metastereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Specifically, workplace interventions like job design and training heightened the threat reaction to negative age-based metastereotypes, while practices that contribute to a positive social identity and therefore to more positive core-self evaluations like recognition and respect impaired it. Findings about the negative effects of job design and training are consistent with social identity theory and with previous research that identified the backlash from age-awareness HRM practices (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015). This suggests that older workers subjectively interpret these HRM practices as an organizational endorsement of negative stereotypes about older workers, that is, as threats (Finkelstein et al., 2015), thus increasing stereotype relevance and triggering stereotype threat (Roberson et al., 2003). For instance, the threat to older workers group reputation and image (group-reputation threat) was particularly exacerbated by training. Older workers may possibly interpret the provision of specific training for their age group as a signal that the organization sees them as a less skilled group and, for that reason, they become

generally less willing to participate in training (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Given that job design and training are understood as a negative stamp that cues stigmatization of older workers (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015), older workers do not reciprocate to the provision of age-awareness HRM practices with positive beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, as predicted by the social exchange theory. Moreover, the perceived organizational endorsement of a negative view of older workers may spillover to all organizational members' beliefs, which in the long run could lead to increased levels of negative age metastereotyping. Against a background of negative consequences of job design and training, the perceived low provision of age-awareness HRM practices found in this study turns out to be positive for organizations, as well as older workers. Overall, age-awareness HRM practices like job design and training end up as work stressors for older workers. These practices are likely to damage older workers' self-worth, impair their need to belong and be seen in a positive light. As a result, older workers are required additional psychological efforts to deal with the job strain associated with age-awareness HRM practices.

On a more positive note, findings suggest that recognition and respect act as impeding boundary conditions of age-based stereotype threats. Unlike job design or training, recognition and respect practices are not designed exclusively for older workers. While those age-awareness HRM practices put older workers private and public collective self-esteem at stake, thus making their inclusive aim to fire back against the very targets they were intended to support, general HRM practices like recognition and respect are based on the equal treatment of organizational members regardless of their age. In accordance with social identity theory, practices that explicitly show that older workers are valued and desirable organizational members (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011) lessen worry and concern of not being able to construct a positive social identity at work (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015). This sign of organizational support would be even more effective if organizations reinforced intergenerational network groups (Friedman & Holtom, 2002), thus making clear to all their members the value placed on the organization's older workers (Kulik, 2014b).

Although moderation effects of recognition and respect were in the expected direction, the size of the effects was small. As pointed out above, technostructural efforts like job design heightened age-based threats, and even the recognition and

respect placed on older workers hampered age threats to a limited extent. In line with this reasoning, organizations are likely to hamper age-based threats more effectively by designing and implementing workplace social interventions such as team building (Finkelstein et al., 2015; Zabel & Baltes, 2015). Given that these interventions focus on memberships other than on age groups like the team, the department, or the organization, relational sources of bias are eliminated and inclusion would be fostered, thus reducing the potential for age stereotyping. All in all, study moderation findings contribute to the debate about the merits of HRM interventions in retaining older workers. Specifically, HRM interventions that target discrete organizational groups like older workers, unlike HRM practices in general, may be, after all, a costly solution for organizations and for older workers.

5.3. Age-based stereotype threat outcomes

Regarding the stereotype threat psychological outcomes commonly referred to in the literature (Steele et al., 2002), this research examined two of them: work disengagement and organizational disidentification. In the second step of the current study, the relationships between own-reputation threat and the two psychological abovementioned outcomes were analyzed followed by the assessment of the relationship between two core threats (own-reputation threat and group reputation threat) and organizational disidentification. In both cases, age-based stereotype threats were proposed as mediators of the relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and psychological outcomes. The two age-based stereotype threat outcomes are worth further discussion.

One of the most interesting findings of the study was that own-reputation threat was positively related to negative work attitudes, thus confirming that stereotypes are perceived as threats by older workers and that own-reputation threat consequences can be observed and measured outside laboratorial settings. Still, results seem to suggest that negative age-based metastereotypes are the main driver behind those relationships. Indeed, the effects size of own-reputation threat on work related attitudes was small. These results are in line with previous findings regarding the magnitude of stereotype threat effects (Xavier et al., 2014) and may be explained by a number of different

factors. Regarding work disengagement specifically, it seems reasonable to assume that negative age metabeliefs threaten older workers psychological safety by calling into question their worth and contribution for team and organizational goals, thus activating organizational disidentification. Unable to express their true selves, older workers might feel useless and increasingly disconnected from their work. Besides the effects of negative age biases, phenomena such as the late-career work disengagement (Damman, Henkens, & Kalmijn, 2013) also help to understand older workers' sensemaking process about work disengagement. Throughout their career, workers go through different stages, each with different motives prevailing (e.g., growth, maintenance, regulation). Older workers are likely to focus their attention and energy on prevention or regulation of losses rather than on career growth. Herewith, both the late-career work disengagement associated with work activities' perceived costs and returns in the preretirement period (Damman et al., 2013) and older workers experience of stereotype threat may contribute to their work disengagement. In addition, researchers have suggested that workers might cope differently with stereotype threat depending on the stage of response to it (Block et al., 2011). For instance, in a study with female workers, Bedyńska and Żołnierczyk-Zreda (2015) found a curvilinear relationship between stereotype threat and work engagement suggesting that stereotype threat may either impair the work engagement of female workers or, by means of an extra effort to disconfirm the negative stereotype, may boost workers engagement. Thus, the relationship between own-reputation threat and work disengagement is not clear cut calling for further research on this topic.

The same reasoning may be applied to appreciate the relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification. Given stereotype threat recursive nature, it may lead to long-term consequences being organizational disidentification one of them. The results are consistent with this assumption. However, since the disidentification process is thought to be very slow, it is virtually impossible to insulate the causal effect of own-reputation threat on a chronic experience like organizational disidentification. Furthermore, it is also suitable to accept that own-reputation threat might only be one of the variables predicting organizational disidentification. In addition, it is likely that among organizational disidentification triggers, much more proximal variables such as organizational reputation or cynicism

may be activating organizational disidentification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004) above and beyond own-reputation threat distal effects.

Positive relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and negative work attitudes were also evinced. Compared with own-reputation threat, the magnitude of the relationships negative age-based metastereotypes had with negative work attitudes was much stronger. Taken these findings together, it is suggested that negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat in the workplace act as psychological demands affecting workers' well-being. Occupational stress models such as the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) have identified numerous working conditions that influence workers' well-being and job strain. It is likely that older workers are protecting themselves from the strain generated by negative age-based metastereotypes through negative work attitudes like work disengagement. Given that interactions in the workplace are shaped by intergroup beliefs, it follows that age identity threats may become an important workplace stressor for stigmatized groups like the older workers. This implication is in line with Barbier et al. (2013) longitudinal work, which showed that perceived stigma should be categorized as a social demand within the JD-R model logic.

This research further explored the relationship between negative age metabeliefs, own-reputation threat, and negative work attitudes. Although ageism research has advanced specific coping strategies older adults use to deal with stigma, subgroup differences in this regard have not been explicitly addressed. Interestingly, findings confirmed that a partially mediated model predicts work disengagement and organizational disidentification equally across two older workers age groups. It is interesting to note that both older workers subgroups, the *younger-older workers* (aged 50-to-54), and the *older-older workers* (aged 55-to-59) exhibited immediate and chronic defensive responses to negative age-based metastereotypes and own-reputation threat. While these results are not surprising with regard to the immediate reactions like work disengagement, the report of chronic responses of organizational disidentification by the youngest group of older workers is particularly intriguing. It may be the case that different stages coexist within the spectrum of long-term responses to stereotype threat (Block et al., 2011) and thus more research should be done to investigate this hypothesis. In addition, this study was unable to evince that older workers of different

age groups have different reactions to negative age-based metastereotypes, as predicted by Finkelstein et al. (2015).

Besides testing a mediation model with own-reputation as the single mediator, in the second step of the study, a multiple mediation model comprising the co-occurrence of two distinct core threats (own-reputation and group-reputation) was examined. Findings show that while both core threats were positively related to a common age negative belief (negative age-based metastereotypes), their relationship with organizational disidentification was distinct. The path between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification was no longer significant when other antecedents like group-reputation threat and negative age-based metastereotypes were included in the research model. Against previous claims that stigmatized individuals respond to stereotype threat through disidentification (Kray & Shirako, 2011; Steele et al., 2002), multiple mediation results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification.

Two main explanations for these findings can be put forward. Firstly, caring about the negatively stigmatized domain is not among the eliciting conditions of the own-reputation threat experience (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). If that is the case, disidentification with the organizational domain is not an efficient coping strategy to deal with threats to one's self. Furthermore, it is not always possible to avoid stereotyped domains and the work domain is a cornerstone to many individuals. Older workers possibly cope with own-reputation threats with strategies such as age group identification or self-affirmation using a domain other than work. By this token, engaging the ingroup for support might be a useful coping strategy to deal with this type of threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). In fact, the study's results showed a weak relationship between own-reputation threat and age group identification. However, the most likely explanation for non-significant results regarding own-reputation threat in the multiple mediation model may have something to do with the research model adopted. As previously described, single mediation results showed positive relationships between own-reputation threat and both work disengagement and organizational disidentification. Importantly, in the single mediation model, own-reputation threat was the sole threat under research. Given that the multiple mediation research model proposes the co-occurrence of two core threats, and that findings regarding the role of

own-reputation threat are not totally in line with findings from the single mediation model, this may be due to the fact that distinct threats are offsetting each other's effects. Specifically, when taken together in a multiple mediation model, group-reputation threat is likely to offset the relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification.

Multiple mediation model results showed that besides having a positive relationship with organizational disidentification, group-reputation threat also mediated partially the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and organizational disidentification. In line with previous reports on stereotype threat measurement (Xavier et al., 2014), effects size was small. A possible explanation for this might be that organizational disidentification has numerous triggers other than group-reputation threat and that are likely to influence more proximally the outcome than that form of stereotype threat (Streets & Major, 2014).

Reconciling the findings, organizational disidentification, a psychological withdrawal mechanism likely to impact individual outcomes (e.g., retirement intentions, desired retirement age) and organizational level outcomes (e.g., turnover rate) was elicited by only one of the age threats under research in the multiple mediation model, the group-reputation threat. Herewith, since qualitatively different forms of threat are related to different outcomes, these findings add to a growing body of literature that advocates that stereotype threat is a multidimensional construct and provide indirect evidence to the stereotype multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Xavier et al., 2014). Additionally, both mediation models results suggest that the effect on organizational disidentification is mainly due to negative age-based metastereotypes. This is in line with earlier observations, which suggested negative age-based metastereotypes as relevant drivers of the coping mechanisms stigmatized individuals put into play to deal with the negative consequences of stereotyping (Finkelstein et al., 2015). This finding suggests that organizational disidentification should be included in the age-based metastereotype activation model (Finkelstein et al., 2015), extending age-based metastereotypes' effects above and beyond cross-age interactions and behaviors. Along the same vein, other psychological withdrawal responses commonly associated with stereotype threat such as disengagement, could also be considered in the age-based metastereotype activation model, making it even more comprehensive.

In sum, the findings of this study suggest that the combination of negative age-based metastereotypes with a multi-stereotype threat framework contributes to further understand older workers' beliefs and attitudes. One of the issues that emerges from the current study is that stereotype threat measures must specify the target and, by extension, the source of the threat (Xavier et al., 2014). Only by doing so will researchers be able to get a better understanding of the conditions that engage, moderate, and mediate stereotype threat in the workplace.

From a managerial perspective, this study recommends the development of interventions that include workers irrespective of their age and that emphasize a sense of identity with the team and with the organization. In addition, findings about the role of negative age-based metastereotypes and distinct forms of threat suggest that a greater awareness of the age-based stereotype threat is an essential condition to best craft workplace interventions aimed at reducing age threats' detrimental consequences.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The first section of this chapter includes a summary of the main conclusions of the research and its theoretical and managerial implications. Thesis' limitations and recommendations for further research are addressed in the second section. The chapter ends with implications and recommendations for practice.

6.1. General conclusions

As described in Chapter 3, this research was set to address three major research gaps. The first gap concerns the lack of research efforts regarding the psychological outcomes of age-based stereotype threat in the workplace. Relatedly, more scholarship on the age-based stereotype threat triggers and moderators is also lacking. A second gap results from the limited articulation and integration of the age metastereotyping literature and the age-based stereotype threat literature. The third gap is related to the fact that most researchers do not take into account distinct forms of stereotype threat in their work. This research attempts to make several contributions to fill those gaps in the age-based stereotype threat literature.

This study showed that ageism in the workplace is better understood through the integration of the stereotype threat literature and the metastereotype literature. Although often left aside by stereotype threat scholarship, positive significant relationships between negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats were evinced in all the studies, supporting the idea that negative metastereotypes should be included in the stereotype threat nomological network. Results indicate that negative age-based metastereotypes and age-based stereotype threats are distinct parts of the older workers' stigmatization process and that negative age-based metastereotypes are probably the initial step that triggers the worry and concern characteristic of the stereotype threat experience, at least as regards own-reputation and group-reputation threats. Consistent with one of the age-based metastereotype activation model predictions (Finkelstein et al., 2015), the results show that older workers interpret negative metastereotypes as threats. Additionally, moderation results confirmed that job

design, training, and recognition and respect play a role in the age-based metastereotype activation model suggesting that core-self evaluations and workplace interventions are relevant boundary conditions of older workers' threat reactions to metastereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Hence, this research contributes to the literature by showing that negative age-based metastereotypes are pivotal constructs for understanding ageism in the workplace (Shiu et al., 2015). An implication of this pivotal role is the possibility that older workers endorsement of negative age-based stereotypes may also increase one's vulnerability to stereotype threat. Stereotype endorsement was not suggested as a quintessential feature of stereotype threat since one does not need to "believe the stereotype nor even be worried that it is true of oneself" (Steele, 1997, p. 618) to the threat to be activated. Yet, if age-based stereotype threats are activated by own beliefs about what other groups think of one's ingroup, it is likely that one's beliefs about the ingroup also activate age threats. Henceforth, in line with the ideas of Shapiro and Neuberg (2007), it is asserted that stereotype endorsement should be considered a relevant stereotype threat antecedent. Moreover, besides impairing the quality of intergenerational dynamics, the self-endorsement of negative stereotypes may lead to undesirable work attitudes. Considering that, the integration and articulation of the three constructs in a single nomological network of age-based threat in the workplace is suggested: age-based stereotype threats, self-endorsement of negative age stereotypes, and negative age-based metastereotypes. More investigation on the way this network is structured is certainly a promising way to continue informing the ageism scholarship.

The second step of the study offered another important contribution by showing that age-based stereotype threats were positively associated with negative work attitudes, thus confirming that stereotype threats' consequences can be observed outside laboratorial settings. Analyzing more carefully those relationships, it stands out that stereotype threat consequences are contingent on the conceptualization of the stereotype threat construct. This research provides evidence of that relationship. Indeed, the multidimensional conceptualization of stereotype threat and its consequent operationalization showed that the positive relationship between own-reputation threat and organizational disidentification found in a single mediation model is suppressed when other forms of threat like group-reputation threat are present. Moreover, results show that older workers representation is negatively associated with group-reputation

threat, but not with own-reputation threat. In addition, age diversity beliefs were found to moderate the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats, but only in the case of own-reputation threat. This research showed also that differences in the size of moderation effects of perceived HRM practices are contingent on the core threat under analysis. As described, the moderation effect of training was stronger for group-reputation threat than for own-reputation threat. One of the issues that emerges from these results is that stereotype threat measures must specify the target and, by extension, the source of the threat (Xavier et al., 2014). Only by doing so will researchers be able to get a better understanding of the conditions that engage, moderate, and mediate stereotype threat. Overall, these findings are in line with the tenets of Shapiro and Neuberg's (2007) multi-threat model whereby different forms of threat are likely to be elicited and moderated by distinct factors. This research advances theory by providing further support for a multi-threat approach to the experience of age-based stereotype threats in the workplace. Hence, this research may foster the scholars' interest in a multidimensional perspective of age-based stereotype threat in organizations. From an organizational point of view, these findings suggest that there is, therefore, a definite need for managers to take a closer look at the process of social identity management in the workplace in order to improve age management interventions effectiveness.

Still regarding negative work attitudes, results indicate that negative age-based metastereotypes have strong positive correlations with commonly proposed stereotype threat attitudinal consequences. Given that interactions in the workplace are shaped by intergroup beliefs (Shiu et al., 2015), age identity threats are likely to become workplace stressors for stigmatized groups such as older workers. Moreover, results showed that own-reputation threat attitudinal consequences are equally experienced by older workers of different ages, and that increased age group identification exacerbates own-reputation threat attitudinal consequences. Since results provided indication that both negative age-based metastereotypes and core threats seem to impair the relationship older workers of all ages keep with their work and their organization, workplace interventions aimed at tackling the effects of age threats on work attitudes should target older workers regardless of whether they are, or not, at the borderline of the middle-aged group. Taken together, these findings reinforce the idea that the

integration of the stereotype threat literature and the metastereotype literature would represent a step forward in the ageism scholarship.

Stereotype threat theory (Steele & Aronson, 1995) suggests that older workers may respond to age threats in the workplace by distancing themselves from work and from the organization. Besides these consequences, several triggers and moderators have been proposed within stereotype threat scholarship. This research shows that older workers representation and negative age-based metastereotypes are positively related with stereotype threat. It also shows that age diversity beliefs, age group identification, and perceived HRM practices moderate the age-based stereotype threat experience in the workplace.

More often than not, scholars have addressed stereotype threat from a unidimensional perspective. Still, recent accounts have provided support for a multidimensional view of the construct. As such, a comprehensive view of the stereotype threat nomological network, in particular regarding the organizational context, is still missing. This thesis contributes to fill this gap in the literature by examining individual and contextual conditions that shape the age-based stereotype threat experience of older workers of the manufacturing sector, from a multi-threat perspective (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007).

6.2. Limitations and suggestions for future research

Research findings are subject to some limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional design of the research precludes confident conclusions about causality. As interpersonal relations develop over time, overt characteristics in tandem with stereotypical information tend to lose relevance as primal criteria for social grouping. Therefore, this research design, in particular regarding the second step of the study, is not the most suited to capture age-related effects in workers over time and, therefore, the suggested feedback cycle between stereotype-threatening situations in the workplace and their attitudinal consequences (Kaloerinos et al., 2014) could not be properly addressed. While it is contended that the theoretical arguments provided for the observed directions of influence were considerable, a longitudinal research design would be particularly

appropriate to examine changes in the attitudinal responses to age-based stereotype threats over time. Longitudinal designs would also be useful to explore plausible alternative explanations like reverse causality regarding more chronic experiences of stereotype threat (e.g., organizational disidentification causes age-based stereotype threats) and to clarify whether negative age-based metastereotypes are more likely to be perceived as a threat than a challenge, as older workers age. In this regard, it would also be important to use qualitative methodologies like interviews or research diaries to shed more light on the types of coping strategies older workers use to deal with age threats in the workplace. Furthermore, qualitative methods are in the best place to provide a better understanding of the relationships between HRM practices and age threats evinced. In fact, the reasons and motives underpinning the observed distinct moderation effects of job design, training, and recognition and respect on age threats are far from being fully addressed by the design of this research. For this reason, future qualitative work regarding older workers beliefs, preferences, and needs would be of great help for organizations to best *manage ageism*.

Secondly, the reliance on same-source data raises concerns that at least some of the relationships identified arose from common method variance. Data were mainly collected through self-reports of older workers and from similar employee datasets, thus raising the risk that common method variance and same source bias were driving the reported findings, and possibly inflating them (Podsakoff et al., 2012). To circumvent this limitation, several actions were taken. In the first step, objective measures were included in the research model, and in the second step of the study, self-reported data was collected across two different periods. In addition, Siemsen, Roth, and Oliveira (2010) suggested that interactions are more difficult to detect when common-method variance is an issue. Given that interactions were detected, and that the measurement of the predictors and criterion constructs was separated in time in the second step of the study (Podsakoff et al., 2012), it is admitted that common method bias does not play a relevant role in research findings. Still, it is recommended that further research replicates this research using non-self-report outcomes, for instance, by utilizing middle managers and younger workers reports. Moreover, although the inclusion of an objective measure to capture older workers representation was important in order to prevent same-source bias in the study's first step, this measure is not without

limitations. Because perceived age diversity has been suggested to add explanatory power to age-related issues in organizations (Ellwart et al., 2013; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Meyer et al., 2011), it follows that objective diversity measures may fail to properly grasp the meaning organizational age diversity has for older workers. Finally, the sample was exclusively comprised of older workers. While participation and contributions of older workers are key to the successful development of HRM practices (Pinto et al., 2014), HR managers are the ones who actually implement them and their perceptions were not taken into account in the study. Given that the moderation effects of HRM practices neither enlighten managers about what is being done right or wrong, nor what they should do to improve practices' effectiveness, HR managers' perspectives should be assessed in future research.

Next, the results of this research seem to support the idea that age-based metastereotypes play a key role in the intergenerational dynamics in the workplace. However, this research only focused on older workers metastereotypes about younger workers. It is possible that older workers experience of threat may be somewhat different according to the outgroup targeted by the metastereotype (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Bearing in mind that age group memberships are essentially relational and comparative (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), research on the role played by negative age-based metastereotypes about middle aged workers is therefore recommended, in particular regarding age diverse workgroups.

Research is also needed to determine the role played by threat sources other than outgroups like the self or the ingroup in the age-based stereotype experience in the workplace. In addition, this research did not distinguish the potential sources of the age-based stereotype threat experience. It would be interesting to analyse in a systematic way whether, or not, different sources of the stereotype threat (e.g., team mates, supervisors, top managers) and different targets (e.g., the self, the ingroup) share antecedents, outcomes, and boundary conditions. For example, further work could be done to examine the relationship between group-reputation threat, negative age-based metastereotypes, and work disengagement.

Another limitation is that the findings might have been influenced by the cultural and institutional context in which organizations are operating (Chiu et al., 2001; Posthuma & Guerrero, 2013; Schröder et al., 2014), and hence they should be

interpreted with caution. For instance, the fact that most participants worked in large companies mean that these findings may not be transferable to workers of small and medium-sized companies. More specifically, as organizational size decreases it is likely that older workers representation for example becomes a more salient contextual cue. Extending the research to small and medium-sized companies would shed additional light on this issue.

Finally, this research was conducted at a single level of analysis, the individual level. A particularly interesting avenue for research about ageism in the workplace may be explored at the group level and organizational level. In particular, research on group dynamics, intra and intergroup relationships. By crossing levels of analysis, researchers might add explanatory value to the individual accounts of intergenerational dynamics in organizations. For instance, our findings support the idea that recognition and respect foster social identity safety and that psychological safety (Kahn, 1990) may be an important construct shaping older workers beliefs and attitudes. Psychological safety at work may be described as the perception that the expression of one's true self is made possible in a given workplace (Kahn, 1990) and, as such, it likely moderates vulnerability to age-based stereotype threats. Psychological safety has also been suggested to be influenced by the organizational or team compositions, to influence intragroup relationships in diverse teams (Edmondson & Lei, 2014), and it may be the case that it is associated with both attitudinal (e.g., work disengagement) and performance outcomes.

Since phenomena like ageism in the workplace are multilayered and shaped by variables at different levels of analysis that frequently may interact, it follows that multilevel models are in the best position to deal with such complexity (Costa et al., 2013). With that in mind, an agenda for future work is outlined in Figure 8. Figure 8 depicts a cross-level model which includes, in addition to psychological safety, the positive contact between age groups.

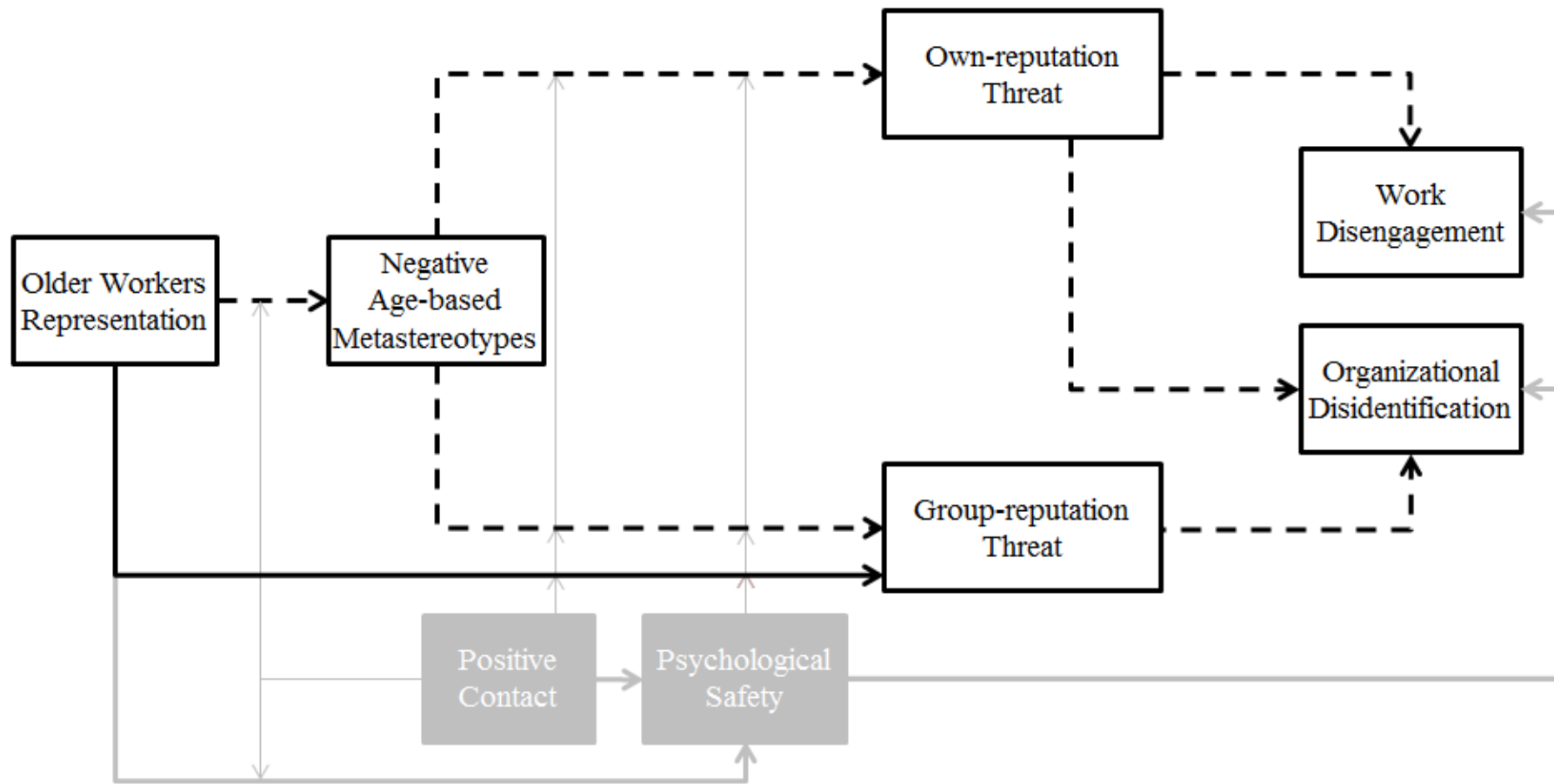


Figure 8. A cross-level model for further research

It has been argued that the perceived quality of work relationships influences psychological safety (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Kahn, 1990), and that positive contact between age groups is linked to lower levels of ingroup identification and decreased vulnerability to stereotype threat among older individuals (Abrams et al., 2006). High-quality relationships across age group boundaries may also influence age diversity effects since they are likely to reduce the social distance between age group members, which in turn sets the tone for more inclusive organizational environments. To this end, it is in any organization's best interest to provide opportunities for cross-group relationships to develop. For instance, socialization tactics like mentorship or tutoring arrangements could be promoted between older and younger workers, alongside with other social events which ensure the conditions for positive intergroup contact on a permanent basis.

6.3. Implications and recommendations for practice

This research has also important practical implications for practitioners to increase the effectiveness of the stereotype threat interventions.

Findings about the role played by perceived HRM practices recommend the development of workplace interventions that include organizational members irrespective of their age and that emphasize a sense of identity with the workgroup or with the organization (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Hennekam & Herrbach, 2015). Above all, findings about perceived HRM practices' upsides and flaws support the usefulness of the social identity approach to the understanding of stigmatized workers' beliefs, feelings, and attitudes. In this regard, a promising approach to tackle stereotypes' pervasiveness, as well as the negative effects of job design and training can be found in workgroup/organizational interventions that emphasize a sense of identity with the workgroup/organization (Haslam et al., 2003). In fact, the overriding role of meaning and salience of social categories in the social identity approach yields a key recommendation for successful group interventions in the workplace. Because this type of interventions values positive social identities of stigmatized workers, it follows that social threats may be reframed as social challenges, thus providing identity safety for these organizational members. Besides providing the context and opportunity for

positive intergenerational contact, workplace interventions that follow social identity approach insights allow subgroup identities to be fully expressed. Hence, intergenerational contact rather than becoming a workplace stressor for members of stigmatized groups may very well be key to foster their identity and psychological safety. Furthermore, workplace interventions building on the social identity approach tenets could also be useful to reframe negative age metastereotypical beliefs. Given that negative age-based metastereotypes were found to be positively related to organizational disidentification, it is suggested that HRM efforts to reduce organizational disidentification should include reframing of metastereotypical beliefs (Casad & Bryant, 2016), for instance through mentoring opportunities that allow direct transfer knowledge and the creation of cross-cutting ties between older and younger workers. Opportunities such as these provide the context for opening lines of communication between different age groups to develop, which in turn may contribute to the reframing of stereotypes and metastereotypes content. Moreover, as these interventions are designed to reinforce shared identities among organizational members (Casad & Bryant, 2016; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Rosenthal & Crisp, 2006), it is likely that they elicit social recategorizations within the organization, and thereby negative stereotyping may lose its power. Relatedly, to emphasize positive stereotypes about older workers may counterbalance the effect of negative stereotypes about them and even to avoid their activation. Briefly, age-based stereotype threats are social identity threats at their very core. Admittedly, the “fight fire with fire” strategy may very well be the most promising to hinder social threats. Social identity interventions aimed at the inclusion of all age groups in the workplace are in the best place to provide identity safety for all organizational members. To be effective, HRM practices should emphasize positive social identities older workers share with their colleagues, rather than giving older workers special treatment that may, after all, reinforce stigmatization. And given that it seems easier to craft HRM practices to accommodate older workers preferences, needs, and goals than to change beliefs, there is a definite reason for managers to appreciate the stereotype threat framework (Kulik, 2014b). In sum, research findings about perceived HRM practices provide several insights on how to reduce older workers vulnerability to age-based stereotype threats. As such, HR

managers must be aware of the managing tools available to include, integrate, and develop these workers' full potential (Scott et al., 2011).

Another important managerial implication is that insights from the age-based stereotype threat framework should be included in managers' age diversity management efforts in order to provide identity safety (Kray & Shirako, 2011), and, thus, inclusion to stigmatized older workers. Research results suggest that HR managers interested in reducing older workers vulnerability to age-based stereotype threats would benefit greatly from taking a closer look at the stereotype multi-threat framework. Several research findings support this implication. For example, results indicated that organizational disidentification is not associated with one of the age-based stereotype threats suggesting that in order to increase stereotype threat interventions' effectiveness, practitioners must be aware of the nature of the threat, namely its targets (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). In addition, results showed that older workers representation is only related to one of the core threats addressed and that age diversity beliefs moderated the relationship between negative age-based metastereotypes and stereotype threats, but only in the case of own-reputation threat. By distinguishing the threats, stereotype management interventions can be tailored to each specific threat, which may facilitate and improve their effectiveness, and ultimately identify optimal age diversity management activities. For instance, the presentation of ingroup role models to older workers is suggested in order to remedy group-reputation threat elicited by older workers representation and negative age-based metastereotypes, whereas self-affirmation interventions might be combined with initiatives that foster age diversity beliefs to alleviate own-reputation threat (Shapiro et al., 2013). Additionally, given that changing an organization's age composition by increasing the number of workers from underrepresented groups is hard to achieve, other type of stereotype management activities should be designed and implemented. For instance, findings recommend the reframing of age-related cognitions and beliefs contents through age diversity training programs. Age diversity training programs may assure that the benefits of diversity are properly and fully realized by organizational members, particularly when the self is under threat. However, since every so often a substantial part of the workforce is left apart from these programs due to their managerial focus, diversity programs do not yield the results they were designed for. In addition, it is

admitted that concerns raised by stereotype threats are seldom openly discussed between managers and stereotyped targets. Therefore, diversity beliefs are not as promoted and supported as they could be. In this context, and provided that all organizational members are included in these programs, age diversity training is recommended. Addressing directly age stereotypes and the social threat they represent with stereotype targets, as well as building awareness about age norms (Hertel et al., 2013) could make room for a promising debate about age-based stereotype threats in the workplace. Specifically, as age diversity training programs remove the focus from prejudiced and stigmatized employees and turn it to everyone's concern, these interventions can prevent contextual cues from hampering the full potential of stigmatized workers. In sum, in order to increase stereotype management efforts effectiveness, managers should identify beforehand the threats' nature. The reason for this is that different threats may have different targets, and as such, for interventions to be effective, they must be tailored to each specific form of threat. Additionally, findings recommend that age-related cognitions and beliefs should be taken into account when organizations design their age diversity management strategy. With this in mind, managing tools such as age diversity training programs could contribute to assure that the benefits of age diversity are fully realized by organizational members. Against this background, one general managerial implication stands out: the need for integrating contributions from the multi-threat framework (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007) in the broader organizational age diversity management strategy.

In short, research findings suggest several courses of action for managers to reduce workplace age threats. Overall, it is suggested that for workplace interventions to succeed in reducing age threat effects, they must identify beforehand the target of the threat, and that they should strive to blur intergenerational boundaries within the organization.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

FIRST WAVE

Exmo(a). Sr.(a):

Este questionário faz parte de um estudo sobre "Estereótipos sobre trabalhadores mais velhos da indústria transformadora" que está a ser conduzido no âmbito de uma Tese de Doutoramento em Gestão, Especialização em Organização e Recursos Humanos na Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Porto. Procuramos conhecer as relações entre práticas de GRH e estereótipos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos, bem como o seu impacto nas atitudes dos trabalhadores mais velhos face à entidade empregadora e ao trabalho. Num quadro de envelhecimento acelerado da população ativa, este estudo visa abrir caminho para uma reflexão sobre os desafios que se colocam a empresas, trabalhadores e decisores políticos neste âmbito e contribuir com recomendações para a ação destes agentes. O seu contributo é imprescindível para a continuidade deste estudo. O preenchimento do questionário é individual e anónimo, as suas respostas são confidenciais servindo exclusivamente para uma avaliação global. O tempo estimado de preenchimento é de 20 minutos.

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!


Eduardo Oliveira

(eaoliveira@porto.ucp.pt)

Empresa #

Questionário #

Página 1 de 4

Informação sociodemográfica

I-IDADE anos

II-SEXO Masculino Feminino

III-ESTADO CIVIL Solteiro(a) Divorciado(a)/Separado(a)
Casado(a)/União de facto Viúvo(a)

IV-NÍVEL DE ESCOLARIDADE Até 4º Ano 5º-6º Ano
7º-9º Ano 10º-12º Ano
Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado Doutoramento
(caso tenha assinalado as opções *Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado* ou *Doutoramento*, por favor indique a sua formação de base em baixo)

V-NACIONALIDADE Portuguesa
Outra Especifique: _____

VI-FUNÇÃO

VII-ANTIGUIDADE NA EMPRESA
(em anos)

VIII-ANTIGUIDADE NA FUNÇÃO
(em anos)

0 - Na sua opinião, a partir de que idade os trabalhadores são considerados "mais velhos" na sua empresa?
(em anos)

Por favor, tenha em consideração que:

a) um(a) "trabalhador(a) mais velho(a)" é alguém com 50 ou mais anos.

b) um(a) "trabalhador(a) mais jovem" ou um(a) "colega mais jovem" é alguém com 35 ou menos anos.

c) um estereótipo é um conjunto de opiniões e expectativas partilhadas sobre as características e os comportamentos de um grupo de pessoas.

d) um grupo etário é um grupo de pessoas de idade aproximada.

Perante o conjunto de afirmações abaixo listadas, indique a sua opinião, assinalando a alternativa correspondente com um "X".

Por exemplo, face à afirmação "Eu considero o meu trabalho um desafio positivo", se a sua opinião é "Concordo totalmente" coloque um "X" sobre "5".

(1=Discordo totalmente, 2=Discordo em parte, 3=Não sei, 4=Concordo em parte, 5=Concordo totalmente)

12	Eu considero o meu trabalho um desafio positivo.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Os meus colegas mais jovens acham que eu tenho menos contributos a dar por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Tenho orgulho em pertencer a este grupo etário.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Este é o único tipo de trabalho que me vejo a fazer.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Eu acredito que pertencer a este grupo etário é uma experiência positiva.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam levar os meus colegas mais jovens a julgar-me negativamente por eu ser um trabalhador mais velho.	1	2	3	4	5
18	A minha empresa oferece aos trabalhadores mais velhos a oportunidade de orientar os colegas mais jovens.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Os meus colegas mais jovens acham que eu tenho menos capacidade por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam confirmar aos meus colegas mais jovens que os estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos são verdadeiros.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Tenho sentido vergonha por aquilo que se passa nesta empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Encontro constantemente aspetos novos e interessantes no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Esta organização faz coisas reprováveis.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Por vezes, sinto-me farto das minhas tarefas.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Eu considero esta organização vergonhosa.	1	2	3	4	5
26	É claro para mim o que significa pertencer ao grupo etário dos trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Os meus colegas de trabalho mais jovens sentem que eu já não estou tão empenhado(a) no trabalho como no passado por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Eu gosto de fazer parte deste grupo etário.	1	2	3	4	5
29	A contratação de trabalhadores mais velhos é um objetivo que a minha empresa deve tentar atingir.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Estou embaraçado por fazer parte desta empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Preocupa-me pensar que as minhas ações possam levar os meus colegas mais jovens a julgar-me com base nos estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam representar pobremente os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Com o passar do tempo, é possível ficar-se "desligado" deste tipo de trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
34	Eu evito divulgar o nome da minha empresa às pessoas que vou conhecendo.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Esta empresa dá oportunidade aos trabalhadores mais velhos para trabalharem a tempo parcial.	1	2	3	4	5

Por favor, tenha em consideração que:

a) um(a) “trabalhador(a) mais velho(a)” é alguém com 50 ou mais anos.

b) um(a) “trabalhador(a) mais jovem” ou um(a) “colega mais jovem” é alguém com 35 ou menos anos.

c) um estereótipo é um conjunto de opiniões e expectativas partilhadas sobre as características e os comportamentos de um grupo de pessoas.

d) um grupo etário é um grupo de pessoas de idade aproximada.

(1=Discordo totalmente, 2=Discordo em parte, 3=Não sei, 4=Concordo em parte, 5=Concordo totalmente)

36	Acontece-me cada vez mais frequentemente falar de forma negativa sobre o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Nesta empresa, os gestores destacam estereótipos positivos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
38	Nesta empresa existem ações de formação específicas para os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Esta empresa preocupa-se em adaptar os postos de trabalho às características dos trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Ultimamente, tenho tendência a pensar menos no meu trabalho e a desempenhá-lo de forma quase mecânica.	1	2	3	4	5
41	Constituir equipas de trabalho compostas por pessoas de diferentes idades pode dar origem a problemas.	1	2	3	4	5
42	Preocupa-me pensar que as minhas ações possam reforçar os estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos na cabeça dos meus colegas mais jovens.	1	2	3	4	5
43	Eu sinto-me cada vez mais empenhado(a) no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
44	Eu quero que as pessoas saibam que eu não concordo com a forma como esta empresa se comporta.	1	2	3	4	5
45	Preocupa-me pensar que por eu ser um trabalhador mais velho, as minhas ações possam influenciar a forma como os meus colegas mais jovens se relacionam comigo.	1	2	3	4	5
46	A pertença a este grupo etário é central para quem eu sou.	1	2	3	4	5
47	A mistura de pessoas diferentes idades nas equipas de trabalho ajuda as equipas a desempenharem bem as suas tarefas.	1	2	3	4	5
48	Eu acho que as equipas de trabalho beneficiam do envolvimento de pessoas de diferentes idades.	1	2	3	4	5
49	Eu acho que as equipas de trabalho devem ser compostas por pessoas da mesma idade.	1	2	3	4	5

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!

Appendix 2

SECOND WAVE

Exmo(a). Sr.(a):

Este questionário faz parte de um estudo sobre "Estereótipos sobre trabalhadores mais velhos da indústria transformadora" que está a ser conduzido no âmbito de uma Tese de Doutoramento em Gestão, Especialização em Organizações e Recursos Humanos na Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Porto. Procuramos conhecer as relações entre práticas de GRH e estereótipos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos, bem como o seu impacto nas atitudes dos trabalhadores mais velhos face à entidade empregadora e ao trabalho. Num quadro de envelhecimento acelerado da população ativa, este estudo visa abrir caminho para uma reflexão sobre os desafios que se colocam a empresas, trabalhadores e decisores políticos neste âmbito e contribuir com recomendações para a ação destes agentes. O seu contributo é imprescindível para a continuidade deste estudo. O preenchimento do questionário é individual e anónimo, as suas respostas são confidenciais servindo exclusivamente para uma avaliação global. O tempo estimado de preenchimento é de 15 minutos.

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!


Eduardo Oliveira

(eaoliveira@porto.ucp.pt)

Informação sociodemográfica

I-IDADE anos

II-SEXO Masculino Feminino

III-ESTADO CIVIL Solteiro(a) Divorciado(a)/Separado(a)
Casado(a)/União de facto Viúvo(a)

IV-NÍVEL DE ESCOLARIDADE Até 4º Ano 5º-6º Ano
7º-9º Ano 10º-12º Ano
Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado Doutoramento
(caso tenha assinalado as opções *Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado* ou *Doutoramento*, por favor indique a sua formação de base em baixo)

V-NACIONALIDADE Portuguesa
Outra Especifique: _____

VI-FUNÇÃO

VII-ANTIGUIDADE NA EMPRESA
(em anos)

VIII-ANTIGUIDADE NA FUNÇÃO
(em anos)

0 - Na sua opinião, a partir de que idade os trabalhadores são considerados "mais velhos" na sua empresa?
(em anos)

Por favor, tenha em consideração que:

a) um(a) "trabalhador(a) mais velho(a)" é alguém com 50 ou mais anos.

b) um(a) "trabalhador(a) mais jovem" ou um(a) "colega mais jovem" é alguém com 35 ou menos anos.

c) um estereótipo é um conjunto de opiniões e expectativas partilhadas sobre as características e os comportamentos de um grupo de pessoas.

Perante o conjunto de afirmações abaixo listadas, indique a sua opinião, assinalando a alternativa correspondente com um "X".

Por exemplo, face à afirmação "Os meus colegas mais jovens acham que eu tenho menos contributos a dar por causa da minha idade", se a sua opinião é "Concordo totalmente" coloque um "X" sobre "5".

(1=Discordo totalmente, 2=Discordo em parte, 3=Não sei, 4=Concordo em parte, 5=Concordo totalmente)

12	Os meus colegas mais jovens acham que eu tenho menos contributos a dar por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Tenho orgulho em pertencer a este grupo etário.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Eu acredito que pertencer a este grupo etário é uma experiência positiva.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam levar os meus colegas mais jovens a julgar-me negativamente por eu ser um trabalhador mais velho.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Esta organização oferece aos trabalhadores a possibilidade de participarem em projetos importantes.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Os meus colegas mais jovens acham que eu tenho menos capacidade por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam confirmar aos meus colegas mais jovens que os estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos são verdadeiros.	1	2	3	4	5
19	É claro para mim o que significa pertencer ao grupo etário dos trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Os meus colegas de trabalho mais jovens sentem que eu já não estou tão empenhado(a) no trabalho como no passado por causa da minha idade.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Eu gosto de fazer parte deste grupo etário.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Esta organização cria postos de trabalho específicos para os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Preocupa-me pensar que as minhas ações possam levar os meus colegas mais jovens a julgar-me com base nos estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Fico preocupado(a) ao pensar que as minhas ações possam representar pobremente os trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Esta organização oferece aos trabalhadores a possibilidade de serem transferidos para trabalhos menos árduos.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Esta organização reconhece o conhecimento e as competências dos trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Esta organização possui planos de carreira para os trabalhadores.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Esta organização disponibiliza formação para que os trabalhadores mais velhos se mantenham atualizados.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Esta organização reconhece quando um trabalho é bem feito.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Esta organização disponibiliza formação para que os trabalhadores mais velhos adquiram novas competências.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Esta organização disponibiliza novas tecnologias para ajudar os trabalhadores mais velhos a executarem as suas tarefas.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Esta organização dá as mesmas oportunidades de promoção/transferência a trabalhadores mais jovens e a trabalhadores mais velhos.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Preocupa-me pensar que as minhas ações possam reforçar os estereótipos negativos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos na cabeça dos meus colegas mais jovens.	1	2	3	4	5
34	Esta organização garante que os trabalhadores mais velhos são tratados com respeito.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Preocupa-me pensar que por eu ser um trabalhador mais velho, as minhas ações possam influenciar a forma como os meus colegas mais jovens se relacionam comigo.	1	2	3	4	5
36	A pertença a este grupo etário é central para quem eu sou.	1	2	3	4	5

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!

Appendix 3

THIRD WAVE

Exmo(a). Sr.(a):

Este questionário faz parte de um estudo sobre "Estereótipos sobre trabalhadores mais velhos da indústria transformadora" que está a ser conduzido no âmbito de uma Tese de Doutoramento em Gestão, Especialização em Organização e Recursos Humanos na Faculdade de Economia da Universidade do Porto. Procuramos conhecer as relações entre práticas de GRH e estereótipos sobre os trabalhadores mais velhos, bem como o seu impacto nas atitudes dos trabalhadores mais velhos face à entidade empregadora e ao trabalho. Num quadro de envelhecimento acelerado da população ativa, este estudo visa abrir caminho para uma reflexão sobre os desafios que se colocam a empresas, trabalhadores e decisores políticos neste âmbito e contribuir com recomendações para a ação destes agentes. O seu contributo é imprescindível para a continuidade deste estudo. O preenchimento do questionário é individual e anónimo, as suas respostas são confidenciais servindo exclusivamente para uma avaliação global. O tempo estimado de preenchimento é de 10 minutos.

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!


Eduardo Oliveira

(eaoliveira@porto.ucp.pt)

Informação sociodemográfica

I-IDADE	<input type="text"/>	anos
II-SEXO	Masculino <input type="text"/>	Feminino <input type="text"/>
III-ESTADO CIVIL	Solteiro(a) <input type="text"/>	Divorciado(a)/Separado(a) <input type="text"/>
	Casado(a)/União de facto <input type="text"/>	Viúvo(a) <input type="text"/>
IV-NÍVEL DE ESCOLARIDADE	Até 4º Ano <input type="text"/>	5º-6º Ano <input type="text"/>
	7º-9º Ano <input type="text"/>	10º-12º Ano <input type="text"/>
	Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado <input type="text"/>	Doutoramento <input type="text"/>
(caso tenha assinalado as opções <i>Bacharelato/Licenciatura/Mestrado</i> ou <i>Doutoramento</i> , por favor indique a sua formação de base em baixo)		
<hr/>		
V-NACIONALIDADE	Portuguesa <input type="text"/>	
	Outra <input type="text"/>	Especifique: _____
VI-FUNÇÃO	<input type="text"/>	
VII-ANTIGUIDADE NA EMPRESA	<input type="text"/>	(em anos)
VIII-ANTIGUIDADE NA FUNÇÃO	<input type="text"/>	(em anos)

Perante o conjunto de afirmações abaixo listadas, indique a sua opinião, assinalando a alternativa correspondente com um "X".

Por exemplo, face à afirmação "Eu considero o meu trabalho um desafio positivo", se a sua opinião é "Concordo totalmente" coloque um "X" sobre "5".

(1=Discordo totalmente, 2=Discordo em parte, 3=Não sei, 4=Concordo em parte, 5=Concordo totalmente)

11	Eu considero o meu trabalho um desafio positivo.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Este é o único tipo de trabalho que me vejo a fazer.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Tenho sentido vergonha por aquilo que se passa nesta empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Encontro constantemente aspetos novos e interessantes no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Esta organização faz coisas reprováveis.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Por vezes, sinto-me farto das minhas tarefas.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Eu considero esta organização vergonhosa.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Estou embaraçado por fazer parte desta empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Com o passar do tempo, é possível ficar-se "desligado" deste tipo de trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Eu evito divulgar o nome da minha empresa às pessoas que vou conhecendo.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Acontece-me cada vez mais frequentemente falar de forma negativa sobre o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Ultimamente, tenho tendência a pensar menos no meu trabalho e a desempenhá-lo de forma quase mecânica.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Eu sinto-me cada vez mais empenhado(a) no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Eu quero que as pessoas saibam que eu não concordo com a forma como esta empresa se comporta.	1	2	3	4	5

Muito Obrigado pela sua colaboração!

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